

GreatTrains

Special #2 2017

HEARTLAND

The golden age
of Midwestern
rail travel



*Panama Limited • Hiawathas • Zephyrs • 400s • Rockets
Southern Belle • Pan-American • Ann Rutledge • Sunbeam
Electroliners • Pere Marquettes • AND MORE!*

MISSOURI RIVER EAGLE

GreatTrains IN PHOTOS

Parlor-observation car 750 caps the St. Louis–Omaha *Missouri River Eagle* at Kansas City Union Station in about 1953. Missouri Pacific launched the Raymond Loewy-styled, ACF-built streamliner in 1940 as the first of its fleet of *Eagle* trains.

Krambles-Peterson Archive



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EDITED BY **ROBERT S. McGONIGAL**

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ON THE COVER:

Illinois Central's *Land O' Corn* from Waterloo, Iowa, nears the end of its daily morning run as it passes through west suburban Chicago on September 19, 1961.

R. P. Olmsted

GreatTrains

HEARTLAND



ROCKETS ///
For Rocket routes,
see page 76

- BRI Burlington-Rock Island
- C&NW Chicago & North Western
- CB&Q Chicago, Burlington & Quincy
- CNSM Chicago North Shore & Milwaukee
- FW&D Fort Worth & Denver
- GM&O Gulf, Mobile & Ohio
- IC Illinois Central
- KCS Kansas City Southern
- L&N Louisville & Nashville
- MILW Milwaukee Road
- NC&StL Nashville, Chattanooga & St. Louis
- PM Pere Marquette
- SP Southern Pacific



0 500 miles

© 2017, Kalmbach Publishing Co., CLASSIC TRAINS, Rick Johnson
Not all lines shown
Some areas not to scale

Flyover country? No way!

People who jet from coast to coast have been known to dismiss the vast territory 36,000 feet below their airliners as “flyover country.” The term has entered the lexicon as derisive shorthand for the dozens of states inhabited by tens of millions of people that coastal folks don’t think much about, let alone visit.

Of course, those high-flyers are missing more than they know. That’s true now, and it was true before the era of JFK–LAX nonstops, back in the heyday of 20th century rail travel when the nation’s midsection was crisscrossed by some of the most stylish passenger trains on the continent. The *Zephyrs*, *Rockets*, and other famous fleets, together with standouts like the *Panama Limited* and *Southern Belle*, established records of speed, innovation, and luxury that rank with coastal legends like PRR’s *Congressional* or SP’s *Daylight*.

In this, the third installment of the series whose first two issues were GREAT TRAINS WEST and GREAT TRAINS EAST, we examine those dashing trains of the heartland. The dozen feature articles, each focusing on a train or family of trains, and ranging from 4 to 12 pages, are drawn from past issues of TRAINS, CLASSIC TRAINS, and their special editions. Another dozen 1- and 2-page “Great Trains in Photos” segments showcase yet more significant trains.

Flyover country? No, thanks — we’ll take the train!

Robert S. McGonigal

GreatTrains HEARTLAND

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JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY

GreatTrains IN PHOTOS

One of the last streamliners to be dieselized, New York Central's *James Whitcomb Riley* is 17 miles into its Cincinnati-Chicago run as it flies through Valley Junction, Ohio, under a cloud of J-1 Hudson smoke in September 1954. The *Riley*, which retained its name after all other NYC trains lost theirs, lasted until Amtrak.

Philip R. Hastings



ZEPHYRS



BURLINGTON

Road of passenger progress



Flashing toward the future, the *Morning Zephyr* from Minneapolis is making 80 mph as it overtakes a steam-powered freight train near La Grange, Ill., in 1940.
Mort Walton

"Make rail travel attractive enough and you'll get the business."
That's the prevailing philosophy on the "Way of the Zephyrs"

BY WILLARD V. ANDERSON

“Tomorrow at dawn we’ll be on our way!” With those words, spoken over a nationwide radio broadcast on the night of May 25, 1934, the president of the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad not only announced a coming event but foretold the future. For with the herald-

ed dawn-to-dusk nonstop run of the first *Zephyr* from Denver to Chicago, the Burlington Route was indeed “on its way” to a new high in passenger service.

It was not without misgivings that boss Ralph Budd spoke those words into the microphone. For even as he said them, the *Zephyr* lay, a cripple, in the railroad’s shops in Denver. A last-minute checkup had revealed a cracked bearing in a motor armature — and the little train was a foreigner in a land ruled by steam. Away from the *Zephyr*’s home base, railroaders could not find replacement parts as easily as would become true for its descendants only a few years later. The nearest replacement bearing was at Omaha, more than 500 miles away.

Ralph Budd knew this, but he burned his bridges behind him. He had faith in the men who were scorching the wires in their search for a replacement part, in the men who were investigating substituting truck axle bearings. And he had faith in the *Zephyr* — as yet

untagged with the prefix *Pioneer* — as a means of bringing back to the rails at least part of the traffic that had been lost to the highways.

The *Zephyr* missed its appointment with the dawn of Saturday, May 26, but not with the dawn of the future. It left Denver more than an hour late and had to be held to 50 mph for an hour or so while the new bearing was being worked in, but before the day was over, the gleaming stainless-steel articulated train glided to a smooth stop on the stage of the “Wings of a Century” pageant at the Century of Progress fair in Chicago. The *Zephyr* had just made the longest and swiftest nonstop run in railroad history, and despite minor troubles along the 1,015 well-guarded miles of CB&Q’s main line, it had averaged 77.6 mph. (Normal Denver–Chicago passenger mileage is 1,034, but the *Zephyr* bypassed Omaha and kept to the direct freight route.)

The *Zephyr* earned a good deal of publicity for itself and for the man who had been president of the Q only two years when he set out to recapture the lost passenger business. And with the publicity came the business — not in dribbles, but in droves. The original *Zephyr* plied between Lincoln, Nebr., and Kansas City, Mo., and it soon became apparent that the upswing in passenger traffic was not to be a flash in the pan but would continue, as far as this train was concerned.

And so, Ralph Budd embarked on a pro-

gram of passenger progress which has resulted in bigger and better *Zephyrs* — still stainless steel, but not articulated, for it was soon found that articulation limited the trains to a definite number of passengers and placed an entire train in the shop when just one unit required repairs. Passenger travel continued to increase, and instead of being a stranger in a land of steam, the original *Zephyr* is the honored chieftain in a new land of diesel power in which replacement parts are as available as automobile accessories.

A FLEET OF ZEPHYRS

Today the *Zephyr* fleet is spread out over much of Burlington’s 11,000-mile system, and, come March 20, 1949, will extend to the Pacific Coast. On that day the Burlington, in conjunction with Denver & Rio Grande Western and Western Pacific, will inaugurate the Chicago–Oakland *California Zephyr*, the last word in Vista-Dome travel.

Mr. Budd’s policy in promoting passenger traffic has been to give the traveling public something a little better than the accommodations offered by competing forms of transportation. The *Pioneer Zephyr*, for instance, was conceived as a glorified railbus which would be economical to operate and more comfortable and more attractive than a bus. Railroads can’t compete with airplanes on speed, but they can be reasonably fast, and a whole lot more comfortable and safer than airplanes. That’s where such trains as the *Denver Zephyr* and the *Twin Zephyrs* come in.

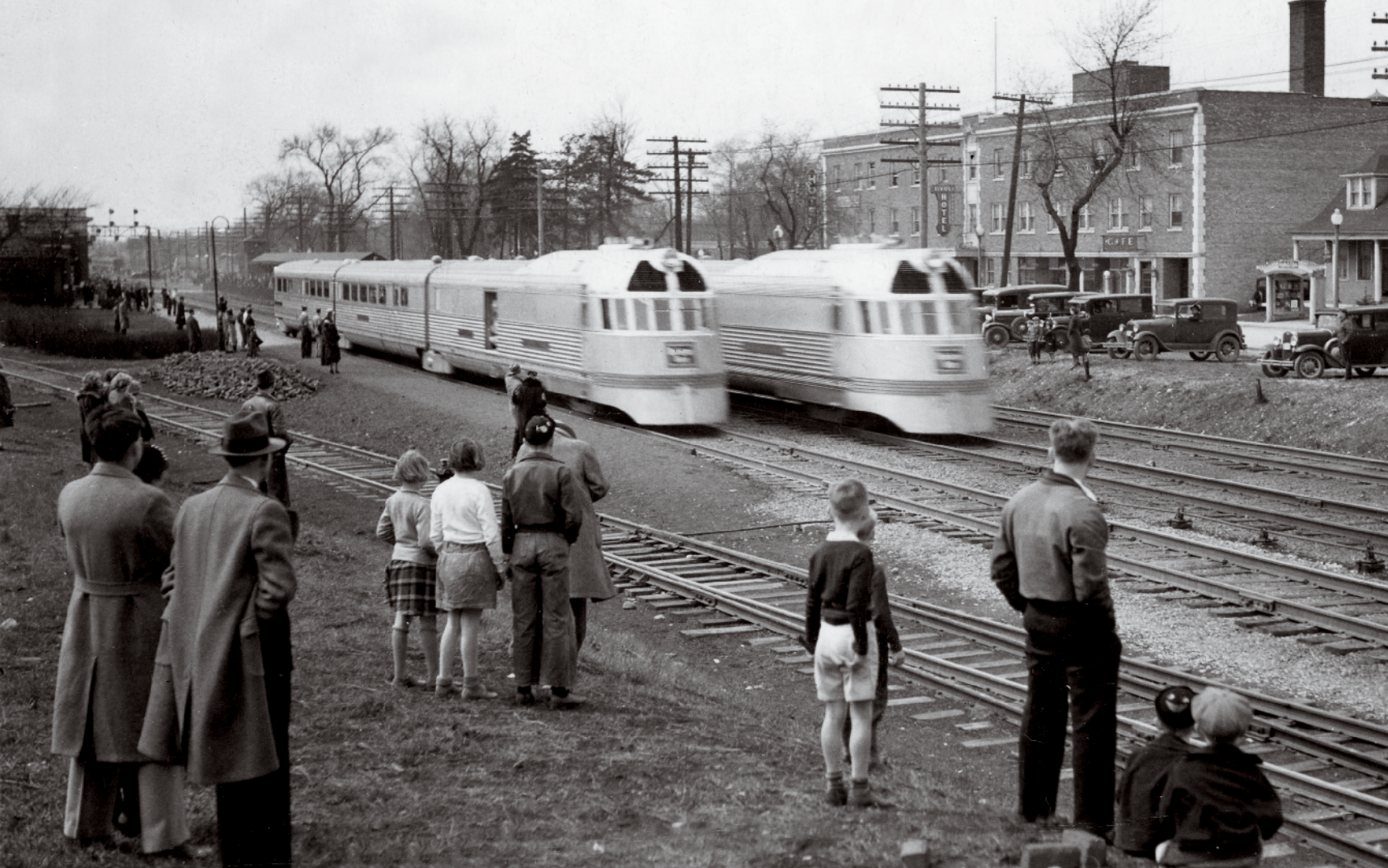
At the same time, Mr. Budd recognizes the fact that some passenger travel just can’t be recovered. That was the basis for his remark in 1947 that he would cut off 10,000 miles of branchline passenger service if he could get permission. These little trains have outgrown their usefulness. “They will have to come off,” says Budd, “not because the railroads are deserting the people, but because the people have deserted us in those places.” Buses and automobiles can serve the branchline communities better, and act as feeders to mainline trains. They not only *can* act as feeders, but *do*, Mr. Budd says, pointing to the parked autos at Aurora, Oregon, and Savanna, Ill., and other stations along the Chicago–Minneapolis route where the *Twin Zephyrs* stop. Branch lines are not “fast track,” and modern streamlined trains need fast track to compete with the highways. New equipment on slow track would be a waste of money and effort.

But wherever there is traffic potential, Budd’s Burlington will exploit it. The *Twin Zephyrs* are a good example of what can be accomplished by giving the public more than it expects. When it was decided, back in the dark days of the ’30s, to put on high-speed daytime service between Chicago and the Twin Cities, the decision was made despite the fact that the Q was carrying an average of only 14 northbound and 12 southbound



The famous *Pioneer Zephyr*, working as Denver–Cheyenne train 31 on CB&Q subsidiary Colorado & Southern, pauses at Longmont, Colo., on October 15, 1949. Even with the addition of a fourth car to its consist, the streamliner’s limited passenger capacity consigned it to branch lines and local services until its retirement in 1960.

Neal Miller



CB&Q launched the *Twin Zephyrs* with a bang, running both trainsets from Minneapolis to Chicago on April 14, 1935. Each carried one half of 44 sets of identical twins, ages 3 to 73. Here the two trains zip past onlookers at Downers Grove, Ill.

Willard V. Anderson

daytime passengers on this route. Obviously, with millions of people living at one end of the line and with more than a million at the other end, there was traffic potential.

TWINS TO THE TWIN CITIES

Twin Zephyr service was inaugurated April 21, 1935, with two sets of equipment, each designed to carry 88 passengers. The demand for the service was so great that before long, people were paying to sit in portable seats in the baggage car! The service had started with one trip daily, but by June 2, each train was making a round trip every day, and the *Twins* soon became known as the *Morning Zephyr* and the *Afternoon Zephyr*. The original conventional train was kept running to take care of passengers where the *Twins* didn't stop, and also head-end mail-and-express business.

Even with their daily double trips, the original *Twins* were crowded. On December 18, 1936, new six-car trains replaced the three-car *Twins*, and less than a year later a



Business quickly swamped the original three-car *Twin Zephyrs*, so in 1936 CB&Q replaced them with longer trains, one of which skirts the Mississippi en route to Chicago.

CLASSIC TRAINS collection



A single E5 powers a nine-car *Afternoon Zephyr* up the center track at Highlands, a suburban stop 16 miles west of Chicago, sometime around 1950. Dome-studded consists like this replaced 11-year-old articulated trains in *Twin Zephyr* service in late 1947.

Frank and Todd Novak collection

dinette coach was added to each train.

The next enlargement of the Q's Chicago–Minneapolis service came in December 1947, when the road inaugurated the country's first Vista Dome trains in regular service. Each of the present *Twin Zephyr* consists, like its predecessor, of seven cars, but can accommodate 149 more passengers owing to the domes and greater car lengths. At present, dome seats are not being sold and are open to any passengers.

Another outstanding example of how the Burlington has improved its passenger service in the past 15 years is on the Chicago–Denver route. In the early 1930s, CB&Q's

Aristocrat took 26 hours 15 minutes to do what the *Denver Zephyr* today is doing in 15 hours 35 minutes. Today's Denver traveler bound for Chicago gets a faster ride than even the Chicagoan bound for New York on New York Central's *20th Century Limited*, for while the *Century*'s trip takes five minutes longer, the *DZ* travels 73 miles farther, 1,034 miles compared with 961. Moreover, the *Century* makes only two scheduled passenger stops en route, while the *Zephyr* makes 10.

The new *California Zephyr* will be a moderate-speed train, its schedule arranged to pass through the most scenic portions of the route in daylight. Leaving Chicago at 3:30

p.m., the *CZ* will whisk riders through the flatlands to Denver overnight, then treat them to a daylight run over most of the Rio Grande's line "through the Rockies, not around them" to Salt Lake City, where Western Pacific takes over after dark to cross the vastness of Nevada. On the second morning, the train is to traverse California's scenic Feather River Canyon in daylight. Running time from Chicago to Oakland will be 51 hours 20 minutes, with the eastbound schedule covering 50 hours 30 minutes, leaving San Francisco Bay in the morning, arriving Denver the second evening, and Chicago the next afternoon.



Newsman crowd a Vista Dome during a publicity trip for one of the *Zephyrs*. This car, like all *Zephyr* cars, was built by the Budd Company (no relation to CB&Q's Ralph Budd).

Wallace W. Abbey

The *California Zephyr* will carry five dome cars: three coaches, one buffet-lounge, and one observation-lounge-sleeper. Besides these, the consist will include a baggage car, two room sleepers, one 16-section sleeper, a diner, and a room sleeper that will run through to and from New York via the Pennsylvania Railroad one day and the New York Central the next.

1949: A BIG YEAR

This is a momentous year for the Burlington. Not only is it the 15th anniversary of the first *Zephyr*'s nonstop Denver-Chicago run, it is also the 100th anniversary of the rail-

road's founding in 1849, when the tiny Aurora Branch Railroad was projected to connect Aurora, Ill., with the Galena & Chicago Union Railroad at Turner Junction, now West Chicago. The G&CU became part of the Chicago & North Western.

From that 12-mile beginning, the CB&Q has become an 11,000-mile network serving 14 states. Although the Aurora Branch is still part of the system, it is a relatively little-used freight-only line. Until 1864, though, it was the Q's only entrance to Chicago, its trains using the (now) North Western from West Chicago. The building of what is now CB&Q's three-track speedway between Chi-

cago and Aurora shortened the distance from 42 miles to 38 and enabled the Q to establish, in the 1880s, a suburban service as far as Downers Grove. This has been extended to Aurora and is one of the finest steam suburban services in the country, and although it is a losing proposition, the railroad is modernizing its suburban coaches. Dieselization is not anticipated soon, however, for the Pacifics that handle the suburban runs do a consistent job of delivering patrons to work on time, and the capital investment is a minimum for the short daily mileage.

The modernization program includes the rebuilding of 60 steel suburban coaches and



CB&Q complemented its fleet of modern trains with modern depots, such as this one at Burlington, Iowa, which opened in 1944. CB&Q



CB&Q Nos. 9900–9907, built during 1934–36, all shared the *Zephyr* “shovel-nose” front-end styling (the final such unit, 9908, came in ‘39). Here No. 9903 departs St. Joseph, Mo., in June 1956, when it was running as the Lincoln, Nebr.–Kansas City *Silver Streak Zephyr*.
Dick Rumbolz, Krambles-Peterson Archive

25 mainline coaches for suburban service, and the addition of 25 to 30 completely new cars. The open platforms that have characterized Q commuter coaches will be closed in, and the cars will be painted to simulate stainless steel. A modified form of air-conditioning is to be used.

Just what is behind this modernizing of such a service that most railroads would be glad to be rid of? President Budd believes he might be able to reduce some of the suburban losses if he can induce more people to use the trains. At the same time, he’s taking a chance of losing more money, because if he induces too many more people to ride the trains, more coaches will be needed. This

will increase terminal charges, which are based on the number of cars using Chicago Union Station. What he’s aiming at is a fuller use of the trains, which are not filled to capacity. If he can strike that happy medium, he can cut the losses.

JIM HILL’S FORESIGHT

CB&Q has always had an eye to improving passenger service. Even back in 1881 it featured “gorgeous CB&Q smoking cars, run only by this line, for the exclusive use of first-class passengers.” Sleeping cars were running on the Q by 1866, and in 1872 two “palatial” dining cars were inaugurated in Chicago–Omaha service. Fully vestibuled trains were running by 1888.

Equipment alone is not enough to make good passenger service, of course. A good roadbed is needed too, and the Burlington was paving the way for its *Zephyr* schedules in the early years of the century, long before anyone envisioned lightweight, streamlined trains. James J. Hill, the “Empire Builder,” was chairman of the board of the Great Northern at the time, and GN and Northern Pacific controlled the Burlington then as they do today.

The year was 1909, and Elmer Howson, division engineer of Burlington’s La Crosse Division, was asked to prepare an estimate of the cost of double-tracking the line from Savanna, Ill., to St. Paul, and to prepare another estimate of the additional cost of reducing the grades to 0.2 percent and the curves to 1 degree. Howson was surprised to be asked for this second estimate, for the grades were already minor and the curves were anything but sharp.

But he went to work, figuring the costs as he rode up and down the division and noting where it would be necessary to build embankments and dump riprap to pull the railroad toward the river, as well as where it would be necessary to make cuts to push it in closer to the bluffs.

Finally the figures were ready. Howson handed them to Hill on the Empire Builder’s business car as it rolled down the river line. Hill mulled the figures over in his mind for a full five minutes, then said, “You will please proceed with the full improvement program. Someday competition will be much stiffer, and we will be ready for it.”

Because of Hill’s farsightedness, it was no trick for the Burlington to match the time of the Milwaukee Road and the

North Western when the *Zephyr* went into competition with the *Hiawatha* and *Twin Cities 400*. Yet the Q’s line to the Twin Cities is 16 miles longer than the Milwaukee’s and 18 miles longer than C&NW’s. A few curves had to be spiraled and CTC had to be installed at the few single-track segments over drawbridges, but basically Burlington’s Twin Cities line was already prepared to handle the exhilarating speed of the *Zephyrs*.

VISTA DOME VIEW

Exhilarating — that’s just the word to describe the feeling you get when you ride a *Twin Zephyr*. High up in a Vista Dome, where you can see everything that’s going on along the railroad, you get a tingling in your blood as you whisk through Downers Grove just 21 miles and 20 minutes after leaving Chicago Union Station. You recall the times you’ve spent an hour going this far on a suburban local, and you get a sort of nostalgia as you flash by the coach yards and remember the old roundhouse that used to serve the little Ten-Wheelers that pulled the suburban trains. Now the trains are handled by Pacifics and the Downers Grove roundhouse is gone. The old turntable with its long wooden push-handles is gone too, replaced by a larger, powered table to turn the 4-6-2s, which when not in use, repose on tracks at the east end of the yard.

You have little time for reminiscence, however. The *Twin Zephyr* is already slowing for Aurora, 38 miles out. The hands of your watch point to 4:34; it was 4 on the head when you left Union Station. You find it hard to realize you’ve averaged 67 mph, for there’s little sensation of speed as you look ahead from a dome. It’s only when you look to the side and watch the familiar landmarks blur by that you realize how fast you’re moving.

This is an exciting new way to travel, but you soon find yourself wanting to explore the lower level of the coach. You descend the carpeted stairway to the rear section, which you find looks much like an ordinary coach, only much shorter. You round

the corner of the staircase and step down the ramp under the dome. Here are doors leading to the men’s and women’s lounges. Up ahead, again at normal floor level, are more coach seats.

This is a different arrangement than you’ll find on the original Vista Dome car, the one Burlington created from a standard lightweight coach in 1945. This was the first dome car on any U.S. railroad, and its construction is





CB&Q's silver fleet went long-distance in 1936 with the launch of the *Denver Zephyr*, seen passing dated-looking heavyweight cars as it arrives in Chicago on July 3, 1949.

Louis A. Marre collection

just another example of the road's policy of giving the public a little more than it expects. Because it was built from an existing car, the floor beneath the dome is not depressed, and seats — some arranged longitudinally to face the windows — occupy the space taken up by the lounges in the newer cars.

All the time you've been exploring, the *Zephyr* has been streaking across Illinois toward Savanna and the Mississippi River. Now you climb back upstairs where you can watch the sun set across the river as the *Zephyr* follows its winding course on those sweeping curves James J. Hill ordered back in 1909. The Mississippi bluffs tower on your right and the broad river is to your left. This is the section "where Nature smiles 300 miles," as Q publicity states, and you're a little sorry you took the *Afternoon Zephyr* instead of the *Morning Zephyr*, for dusk is falling and you think you won't be able to see much after dark.

But here in the Vista Dome, darkness has its recompenses. Up ahead you can see the



Scheduled for scenery, not speed, the *California Zephyr* backs toward Chicago Union Station before its transcontinental voyage to Oakland, Calif., on August 21, 1950.

Wallace W. Abbey

When the *Twin Zephyrs* got new equipment in 1947, their 1936 articulated trainsets were moved to Chicago-Lincoln service as the *Nebraska Zephyr*. On January 8, 1963, the westbound *NZ* stands at Council Bluffs, Iowa.

J. William Vigrass, Krambles-Peterson Archive



beam of the locomotive's headlight as it plays against a bluff just before swinging into a curve. You can watch as the block signals turn from green to red, and you can catch their reflections along the fluted roofs of the cars ahead. With satisfaction, you note how the automobiles lag behind on the highway that parallels the tracks.

You can see all this because the dome lights are dimmed at night; only a blue floor light is kept on so you won't miss your footing if you go downstairs. You can see the moon and the stars, and all the station activities when the train stops at La Crosse and Winona Junction, Wis. And you can see the lights of lineside communities. It's a sightseeing trip you'll remember for a long time.

Still a few miles out of St. Paul, you can see the huge illuminated "1" atop the First National Bank Building near Union Depot, and it helps keep you oriented as the *Zephyr* backs into the station, unloads, then pulls out for Minneapolis. You leave the dome and hurry to your seat to get your hat and coat.

Your watch is in your hand as the *Zephyr* eases to a stop in the Great Northern station, and you're pleasantly surprised to find that you're 5 minutes early!

During your trip you've been impressed with the friendliness and courtesy of the Q trainmen. Perhaps without your realizing it, this has had a lot to do with your enjoyment of the *Zephyr*. It's a part of Burlington passenger policy to encourage trainmen, and others dealing with the public, to make your trip a pleasant one.

"It is more the train personnel than anything else," says Mr. Budd, "that spells the difference between a train that is satisfactory and one that is not. I believe an old train, clean and well maintained, and in [the] charge of courteous people throughout, will make a better impression on patrons than will a fine new train with lack of friendliness and courtesy and tact." Other people, too, have a big part in making your trip a success, and it may be that someone entirely unassociated with the railroad can spoil it for you, if

you'll allow him to. One woman wrote to Mr. Budd and complained that she did not have a good taxi driver on the way to the station!

Burlington's enviable position in the passenger-carrying field is based on all the factors that enter into good service — not only fine trains, not only good roadbed, not only courteous personnel, but a combination of all three. And back of it all is Ralph Budd's conviction that "by making rail travel attractive enough, we have an opportunity to enlarge our passenger business almost indefinitely. A completed trip, if it can be looked back upon with pleasure, should and will encourage another trip."

And a trip on the *Zephyr* — any *Zephyr* — does just that. ■

WILLARD V. "ANDY" ANDERSON joined Kalmbach Publishing Co. in 1936 as a linotype operator and served the firm for 43 years, retiring in 1978 as executive editor of MODEL RAILROADER. Andy was editor of TRAINS during 1948-52, and he died in 1989.





Arriving in St. Louis on an April 1956 morning, the *Texas Special* from San Antonio pulls east past the Union Station leads before backing in. After two years as an all-Katy service, the *Special* moved in 1917 to the Frisco-Katy route via Vinita, Okla. Streamlining came in 1948 with two 14-car trains of Pullman-Standard lightweights. Each road contributed two jointly lettered E7s, with Katy using a 4-6-2 south of Waco until 1949, when it added two Alco PAs. Frisco dropped out in 1959 and Katy made it a K.C.-Texas run.

Fred Scott



Frisco 1400, a 2-double-bedroom 1-drawing-room observation lounge named *Stephen F. Austin*, brings up the rear of the northbound *Special* (Katy's car was 1350 *Joseph Pulitzer*). After Frisco exited, Katy in 1964 cut the train back to Dallas, and the last run occurred July 1, 1965. As built, each set also had an RPO-baggage car, three coaches, a coach-buffet-lounge, a diner, and seven sleepers. Through cars ran from Fort Worth and to Kansas City, plus Washington and New York via PRR.

Jim McClellan

PAN-AMERICAN

TO NEW

Mountain type No. 407 rushes Louisville & Nashville's flagship, the *Pan-American*, toward Louisville in May 1941, before E6 diesels took the reins.

R. L. Kirkpatrick, University of Louisville Archives



ORLEANS

on the L&N

Nine miles of trestles along the Gulf Coast are an interesting feature of a trip on L&N's *Pan-American*

BY ROY G. CLARK

The sign at Gate 6 in the beautiful Cincinnati Union Terminal says simply THE PAN-AMERICAN, implying that to say more would be as superfluous as explaining the meaning of "U.S.A." The 24 years' continuous operation of this fine train by the Louisville & Nashville has, indeed, made its name a byword to everyone who travels. Just to say the train's name is enough.

Let's go down to the platform and take a look at the fine, fast train that will carry us to fabulous and glamorous New Orleans. Up ahead, the 4,000 horses inside a two-unit set of Electro-Motive E6A diesel-electrics are murmuring idly, humming to themselves as they await the signal to go.

Our train No. 99 is long and heavy, but the twin diesels are more than capable of handling it. As we walk back to our Pullman, we count 1 mail car, 1 baggage car, 7 coaches, 1 dining car, and 3 Pullmans — 13 cars in all. Two of the Pullman cars go through to New Orleans; the other will be dropped at Nashville.

While we're waiting for the "all aboard," let's consider the route over which we'll travel. We'll be on Louisville & Nashville rails all



Lined up at Bowling Green, Ky., in the late 1930s are (from right) 4-8-2 No. 414 with train 99, the Cincinnati–New Orleans *Pan-American*, 4-6-2 No. 204 on 199, the Memphis section of the “*Pan*,” and 4-8-2 No. 412 with nameless Cincinnati–Birmingham train 7.

Western Kentucky University Archives; below, Joe Welsh collection

the way, with the exception of the Cincinnati Union Terminal tracks and the elevated trestle tracks leading onto, and off of, the Ohio River bridge into Covington, Ky., owned by the Chesapeake & Ohio.

All 922 miles to New Orleans are protected by automatic block signals, with 209 miles of the distance being double-track. In addition, automatic train control, with signal-light indications in the locomotive cabs, is in use on the 140-mile stretch between Mobile, Ala., and New Orleans, a busy piece of railroad. Centralized traffic control is in effect between Brentwood, Tenn., and Athens, Ala., 93 miles, and between Montgomery and Mobile, 172 miles.

HIGHBALL FROM CINCY

It's 9 a.m. now, and we go out into the vestibule just in time to see the conductor give the highball. The big diesels walk our 13 cars out of the terminal as if they were hauling a three-car local. We swing to the left on the trestle along the Ohio River's north bank, curve right to cross the bridge, and in nine minutes we are at the depot in Covington, Ky. It's only 8:09 here because we've gone back to Central Time, on which we'll stay for the rest of the nearly 24-hour trip.

At Latonia, we turn right as L&N's line to Corbin, in the Kentucky coalfields, goes straight ahead, here on double track. Beyond Kentucky, that line goes through Knoxville, Tenn., en route to Atlanta. Now our diesels will have to show their stuff, because despite this route to Louisville being called “the Short Line,” it's 114 miles through the rugged foothills of the Ohio River valley, with few straight stretches. Considering the terrain, we do a pretty good job, backing into Union Station, next to the L&N's headquarters building, on-time at exactly 11:15 a.m. We've averaged a bit better than 35 mph over a difficult piece of railroad.

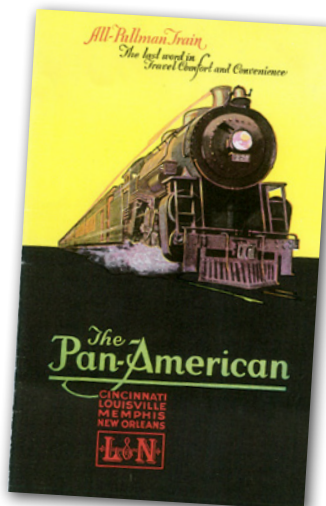
We have 15 minutes to stretch our legs, incidentally learning that L&N has more than 10,000 employees in Louisville, most of them in its general offices and big shops. L&N shares the depot with the Pennsylvania and the Monon. Promptly at 11:30 we're away on the double-

track line to Elizabethtown and Bowling Green, Ky., en route to Nashville. The track straightens out, and we begin to roll. We arrive Bowling Green at 2 p.m., having covered the 114 miles from Louisville at an average speed of 45.6 mph.

Four miles south of Bowling Green we pass Memphis Junction, where the heavy-duty Memphis Division branches off southwest. The Memphis section of the *Pan-American*, No. 199, running 10 minutes behind us all the way from Cincinnati, will pass through here soon. With its New York–

Memphis Pullmans, it is the connection off the PRR in Cincinnati for west Tennessee and Memphis traffic.

In another half hour we're in Tennessee, and at 3:41 we cross the Cumberland River in Nashville, admire the classic Doric columns of the state capitol to the left, and pull into Union Station at 3:43. L&N shares this classic structure, like Louisville's featuring a big trainshed, with subsidiary Nashville, Chattanooga & St. Louis. We have a 12-minute service stop here while the New York Pullman





Back-to-back E6 diesels lead No. 99, the southbound *Pan-American*, over the Green River bridge at Mumfordsville, Ky., in the late '40s.

Louisville & Nashville Historical Society collection



At Cincinnati Union Terminal sometime in 1955, E6 No. 753 and E7 No. 778 start the *Pan-American* on its 922-mile run to New Orleans.

Louisville & Nashville Historical Society collection



L&N light Pacific No. 232 pulls out of Memphis Union Station with train 198, the northbound Memphis section of the *Pan-American*, on a wintry day in the late 1940s.

B. L. Stone, Krambles-Peterson Archive

is cut out and our train is watered. Nashville is an important point for the L&N, but even more important for the NC&StL, whose general offices and shops are here. Its fleet of famous "Dixie" trains, on the fastest schedules between Chicago and Florida, gain the L&N at Evansville, Ind., off the Chicago & Eastern Illinois, use our route from the junction of Amqui, just north of Nashville, into the city. From there, they head southeast for Chattanooga and Atlanta en route to Jacksonville.

At 3:55 we depart, soon watching for Vine Hill interlocking tower, where the roar of the passing *Pan-American* used to be broadcast daily by Nashville radio station WSM. A microphone was suspended from the tower on the track side, and folks all over Tennessee and north Alabama used to set their watches by the sound of the train coming to them by radio. No movie or radio star ever received more fan mail than the *Pan-American* used to get, asking how fast the train was running, how many cars there were that day, what was the engineer's name and, once in a while, a shy inquiry asking if he were married. The broadcast has been suspended now, and many folks have written WSM, saying they miss it.

We're into Birmingham, Ala., after dinner and on-time at 8:15 p.m., and out at 8:35. Between Birmingham and Montgomery, we cover the 98 miles at an average speed of almost 46 mph, and at 10:45 we're in Mont-

For several years, the sound of the south-bound *Pan-American* was picked up by a microphone hung out from Vine Hill Tower on the south side of Nashville and broadcast live over radio station WSM. Here the *Pan's* lead E6, carrying green flags for a following section, is about to hit the Tennessee Central diamond at Vine Hill.

University of Louisville Archives





The blue-and-silver *Humming Bird*, launched in late '46 as a streamlined running mate to the *Pan* on the Cincinnati–New Orleans route, accelerates away from its stop in Covington, Ky., in 1949. The office towers of downtown Cincinnati are in the distance.

John E. Wenzel

gomery. The capital city's depot, which also has an impressive trainshed, is an important junction with the West Point Route, which hosts the *Crescent* and the *Piedmont Limited*. These are among the flagships of the Southern Railway from New York (on the PRR) and Washington, D.C., which west of Atlanta are on the West Point Route, here becoming L&N's responsibility on to New Orleans.

Our dining car is cut out here and, as the switcher puts it on another track, we recall the two excellent meals served to us under difficult, heavy travel conditions during World War II. Even during wartime, the L&N never forgot that a good meal on a train will compensate for almost anything else that may happen on the trip.

ATLANTA, THEN BEDTIME

The car-knockers complete their job, and we're out of town at 11:15, about time for us to go to bed, as we want to get up early tomorrow morning to look at the interesting Gulf Coast country. During the night, two Pullmans from Jacksonville will be added at Flomaton, Ala., having come across on the joint Seaboard Air Line-L&N route via Chattahoochee, Fla.

At 3:50 a.m. the *Pan-American's* stop at Mobile was so quiet that we didn't even wake up, but just west of Pascagoula, Miss., the *rumble-rumble-rumble* of the train's wheels on a trestle awakens us, and we raise the window shade. In the early morning half-light we see we're passing over a large body of water and realize that we're now on the historic Mobile–New Orleans portion of the route, the railroad that seems to be over water half the time. More sleep would be nice, but we don't want to miss this stretch of line so we get up.

We soon find that it's been worthwhile, for nowhere in the United States is there a more interesting piece of railroad, and certainly none subject to as many hazards of nature. Nine miles of trestles traverse the Gulf Coast bays, the longest, at Bay St. Louis, Miss., being 10,233 feet. Every trestle is exposed to the ravages of teredo shipworms, rough water, high tides, and hurricanes; damage from one of the latter once blocked the line for 29 days.

Over miles of salt marshlands, seemingly without bottom, the track had a habit of sinking out of sight overnight until the railroad finally got the best of the situation.



L&N's records show one instance where the fill on each side of a short trestle sank 18 inches one night. Much of the credit for overcoming this Gulf Coast situation goes to Capt. A. J. Catchot, an 81-year-old bridge and building superintendent whose philosophy, gained in 62 years of battling teredos and hurricanes, is "Never trust 'em!"

But nowhere in America does a railroad traverse any more beautiful and salubrious

In New Orleans, E7 758 and E8 796 cross Canal Street as they bring the *Humming Bird* from the yard to L&N's riverfront station in the early 1950s. About 12 hours later, the *Pan* will make the same move.

James G. La Vake



country than this Mississippi Gulf Coast. Never very hot because of Gulf winds and never very cold, it is the happy medium between the cold North and maybe too hot Florida. The Edgewater Gulf Hotel, near Biloxi, with its private L&N railroad station, is one of the finest resort hotels in the nation. Other delightful resort towns are Gulfport, Pass Christian, and Bay St. Louis. Through Pullman service from New York, Chicago,

and Jacksonville makes these spots easily accessible.

Soon we're in the outskirts of New Orleans, and we pull into L&N's station at 7:30 a.m. We have made the 922-mile trip in 23½ hours, an average of about 40 mph. If we deduct the time consumed at service stops, the actual running speed is 42.3 mph, which is not bad considering the territory traversed. ■

ROY G. CLARK wrote nine feature articles for *TRAINS* between 1944 and 1951, most about journeys on passenger trains, including on Southern Pacific's *Sunset Limited* reprinted in our 2016 special edition *GREAT TRAINS WEST* and Southern Railway's all-Pullman *Crescent*, New Haven's all-first-class *Merchants Limited*, and NC&StL's *Dixie Flyer* in *GREAT TRAINS EAST*, also published in 2016.

GreatTrains IN PHOTOS



Chicago & Eastern Illinois hosted many notable interline trains whose northern terminus was Chicago. It also was one of the first roads to field new streamliners after World War II in the form of two Pullman-Standard trains. The more de luxe of the pair was the Chicago–Evansville, Ind., *Whippoorwill*, which sported an RPO-baggage-coach, four full coaches, a diner, and a parlor-observation. (The RPO section was never used for mail.) People tour the *Whippoorwill* at Milford, Ill., before its November 8, 1946, inaugural run.

CLASSIC TRAINS collection



C&EI's other regional streamliner was the *Meadowlark*, which made a daily turn from tiny Cypress, Ill., to Chicago. Inaugurated on October 6, 1946, the train consisted of an RPO-baggage-lunch counter-lounge car and four coaches. In this April 1948 photo, the northbound train makes its next-to-last stop, 63rd Street ("Little Englewood"), the Chicago & Western Indiana station that served five railroads.

John Proebsting

All 12 cars built for C&EI's regional streamliners were named. The parlor-obs was *Chicagoland*, and it looks sharp on the rear of the *Whippoorwill* departing Terre Haute, Ind., on August 28, 1947, during the first half of the train's daily round trip to Chicago. Alas, the dapper *Whippoorwill* was discontinued the following year and its cars dispersed to other trains.

Frank and Todd Novak collection

SUNBEAM AND HUSTLER

SP's



Lone Star STREAMLINERS

Junior versions of the *Daylights* keep Southern Pacific competitive between Dallas and Houston

BY DAVID P. MORGAN



Pacific 651, streamlined and painted in the manner of SP's *Daylight* 4-8-4s, steps smartly out of Ennis, Texas, with the Houston-Dallas *Hustler* in September 1947.

James Bowie



Pacific 650 leads an all-streamlined *Sunbeam* consist out of Dallas Union Station at the start of the train's 4-hour 25-minute dash to Houston. Departing their terminals in late afternoon, the *Sunbeams* make only two conditional stops on their 264-mile trips.

H. A. DeGolyer; below, Joe Welsh collection

For streamliners that are Texan to a T, Southern Pacific's *Sunbeam* and *Hustler* are strangely foreign in their ancestry. The two trains (which are basically abbreviated red-and-orange duplicates of SP's original 1937 *Daylights* in California), were ordered in San Francisco, built in Chicago, and are usually hauled between Dallas and Houston by 4-6-2s transferred from SP's western lines to its Texas & New Orleans subsidiary or by new diesels assembled by Alco-GE in Schenectady, N.Y. All of which bothers traveling Texans not in the least. Like the Lone Star State, the trains are colorful, roomy, fast, and modern; their design has not ruffled the fashion consciousness of Dallas, and their schedules have won the approval of bustling Houstonians. Even that most robust of all *Sunbeam-Hustler* patrons — the Texas A&M senior at College Station — has staunchly

supported them for more than a decade.

But more about these celebrated streamliners later; at the outset they should be clearly defined in the timetable, since the *Sunbeam-Hustler* service of the SP may be considered as one, two, or four trains, depending on how you view the subject.

It works out this way: The railroad's Dallas-Houston streamlined service is two daily 528-mile round trips for two essentially identical trains. One leaves Houston each morning as the *Hustler*, rambling north to Dallas on a fast but multi-stop schedule that satisfies through passengers while it serves up streamlined luxury to a score of small Texas towns along the way. It's into Dallas at 1:50 p.m.

In the late afternoon, at 5 o'clock to be precise, the same train slips out of Texas' fashion metropolis as the sophisticated *Sunbeam*, headed for Houston on a hot mile-a-minute timetable that allows for just two brief

conditional halts en route. Arrival is at 9:25. The companion train has meanwhile run off the same routine, except in reverse directions. All in all, it stands as an A-1 case history of how to please more people with less investment in motive power and rolling stock.

All human planning is subject to error, so there is one hitch. All of the streamlined cars employed on these runs are labeled *Sunbeam*, since they were originally styled for that





The *Sunbeam* departs SP's Grand Central Station in Houston on-time at 4:45 p.m., August 9, 1953; she should be in Dallas by 9:10.
R. S. Plummer

train alone. Hence not a few unenlightened *Hustler* patrons have to be persuaded aboard by the friendly but firm explanations of gatemen and train crews. For other and more experienced riders, possibly familiar with a Chicago & Eastern Illinois streamliner in West Palm Beach, Fla., or *Daylight* 4-8-4s entering El Paso, this little matter presents no large difficulty. They accept such things on faith.

A ZEPHYR WAS FIRST

Streamliner service made its debut in Texas quite early — but not on the SP. The *Sam Houston Zephyr*, which inaugurated Dallas–Houston streamlined service on the jointly owned Burlington–Rock Island Railroad on October 1, 1936, was, in fact, the second *Zephyr* the CB&Q ever owned, as it was one of the original *Twin Zephyrs* on the Chicago–Minneapolis haul. No. 9901, as it was designated on the Q's roster, was not the forerunner of a general streamlining campaign across Texas (that had to wait until after World War II), but a striking testimony to the rampant rivalry for passenger traffic between Texas' two largest cities. Here, if you please, was Burlington in a Depression year authorizing the assignment of a popular and expensive new speedster for a schedule far removed from such important Q-served

centers as St. Louis, Kansas City, and Denver.

Here, too, was a stainless-steel challenge that Southern Pacific could not overlook unless it cared to withdraw from the Dallas–Houston daylight trade. This flashy articulated speedster had all Texas talking about it — and Texans, in their usual spirit of good sportsmanship, expected T&NO (which operates SP lines in Texas and Louisiana) to stage an equally good show.

The gales of this tempest swept right into San Francisco, headquarters of T&NO's parent. Southern Pacific management took note of the T&NO crisis, but there is only speculation as to the exact date on which a decision was reached. Available data show that the forthcoming *Sunbeam* streamliner was announced in 1937 — but that the 16 cars assigned to T&NO for the new service were part of a bulk order sent to Pullman-Standard in June '36, several months before CB&Q reassigned its No. 9901. In other words, SP may have had the idea in the first place while Burlington had the equipment to make it good.

San Francisco decided a condensed version of the new *Daylight* would do the trick.

Today, more than a dozen years after their construction, these *Sunbeam-Hustler* streamliners still stack up remarkably well. They are, for one thing, legitimate streamlin-

ers, complete with wide diaphragms, full skirts, retractable steps, and smoothly arched roofs. They are fabricated of Cor-Ten steel, sheathed in corrugated stainless steel, and dressed in red, orange, and black with neat center nameboards, and they fit the original purpose of airflow design: reduced wind resistance. The same cannot be said for many another and newer streamliner.

Inside, they are roomy — 5¼ inches wider, for instance, than a conventional standard car. This, coupled with riding ease, has given SP's trains a reputation for comfort that reaches beyond the mere gloss of advertising copy. The most common reason advanced for *Sunbeam-Hustler* comfort, incidentally, is the weight per car. For pre-war cars that measure out to just over 79 feet, they are comparatively heavier than newer 85-footers on other carriers.

The limited length of SP's new streamliners, together with the easy profile of their route, made the locomotives of their West Coast sisters — Lima-built *Daylight* 4-8-4s — far too heavy a prospect. As far as the press was concerned, SP was building motive power especially for its new Texas schedules in T&NO's own Houston Shops. Actually, Houston was modernizing and streamlining three veteran P-6 Pacifics purchased by T&NO from its parent's Pacific Lines (west of



At Fairbanks, a conditional stop in the flatlands 11 miles north of Houston, the *Hustler* gets moving again on its 5-hour 50-minute morning run to Dallas in August 1951.

Donald Sims

El Paso). SP 2455, 2456, and 2457, built by Brooks in 1913, became T&NO's P-14 class as 650, 651, and 652, but with a definite difference. Boiler pressure was lifted, boosting tractive effort; Boxpok drivers were counter-balanced for speeds up to 100 mph. Then the locomotives were dressed up to resemble streamlined SP Northerns, and their standard Vanderbilt tanks were painted to match.

The twin *Sunbeam* consists entered revenue service on September 19, 1937, replacing heavyweight trains of the same name. The old trains became the *Hustlers*. Later it was decided to run the streamliners on a daily round-trip basis, thereby making the *Hustlers* new in consist as well as schedule.

Competitively speaking, these *Sunbeam-Hustlers* have never had an easy time of it. The rival Burlington-Rock Island route is shorter by 14 miles, permitting considerably faster timing. (In the interests of accuracy, it should be noted that B-RI track extends only from Teague south to Houston. The adjoining mileage from Teague to Dallas is owned by the Katy.)

Highways are good, and airline service is excellent. In spite of all this, the *Sunbeam* nets \$3.29 a mile. This is not as much as is

made by the overnight *Owl* on the same run (with the benefit of heavy express and mail loadings) or by the transcontinental *Argonaut* (with a greater traffic potential and no non-SP rail competition), but it is relatively commendable. T&NO officers and operating men are enormously proud of their streamliners — and they have a right to be.

The latest *Sunbeam-Hustler* refinement may also boost their earnings by cutting fuel costs. The innovation is the diesel; at present this new power is handling the northbound *Sunbeam* and the southbound *Hustler*. These diesels, 4,000 h.p. Alco-GE pairs of cab units, work in an assignment pool between Del Rio, Houston, Dallas, and New Orleans — keeping their monthly mileage high by dovetailing certain runs of the *Owl*, the *Sunset Limited*, and the *Argonaut* with the runs of the streamliners. Certainly the extension of dieselization to Dallas cannot be considered as a reflection on the rebuilt Pacifics; over a dozen years, including wartime, they managed to rack up an on-time record of better than 97 percent. It will take a better locomotive than a diesel to beat that.

If you have ample time on your next north-south trip through Texas (or perhaps

it'll be more convenient anyway), arrange to ride the *Hustler*. You'll miss the high-speed nonstop operation of the *Sunbeam*, but you'll see all of the 264-mile route in daylight. You will observe the spectacular running required between stations to make the timecard, and (if you are holding a parlor-car seat) you will have a better choice of chairs in the neat solarium of the diner-lounge-observation car on the tail end of the train.

A TRIP ON THE *HUSTLER*

Pacific 621 was substituting for No. 16's regular streamlined P-14 when I rode the *Hustler* out of Dallas less than a month before the train was dieselized. No. 621 is heavier than the train's usual 4-6-2, and it also has the advantage of a booster-equipped trailing truck. The only standard car in the consist was a steel arch-roof express-mail painted in *Sunbeam* hues and cut in behind the black Pacific's Vanderbilt tank. Then came one reclining-seat coach (or chair car, as they are known in the Southwest) followed by a two-unit articulated coach. The diner-lounge-observation with space for parlor-car customers brought up the markers.

Before departure, the brakeman, as usual, took an interest in an expressed desire to see "what's on the head end."

"Oh, there's plenty of time. Let's see, now — 11 minutes before we leave. Go right on up. Engine number? No, I don't recall. Haven't seen the orders myself this morning."

In the future it should be instructive to go forward and listen a minute or so to the standing whine of turbo-supercharged Alco-GE diesels, but I'll miss a Pacific like 621 — miss the warm, smoky roar about her oil-fed firebox; miss the pressurized plaint of an opened injector.

Hustler time, 8:10 a.m., and three pairs of 77-inch drivers started to roll the streamliner out of Dallas' newly modernized Union Station. I slipped my bag into the commodious luggage rack at the end of the coach and settled into a window seat for a Chesterfield and a glance at the headlines of the *Dallas Morning News*. Sight of smoke, rather than a sensation of sway, was evidence that 621 was building up speed and leaving the city limits for open country.

"Good morning!"

The friendly steward in the white vest pulled back a chair in the diner and summoned a waiter. It was one of those bright Texas mornings (not just sunny, but *bright*) when a "ham and eggs over" breakfast on a streamliner seems to be grasping at the extremes of good living: inside, the glint of polished table service and the glisten of ice-

With a nine-car consist that includes a heavyweight diner, the 4-6-2 on the southbound *Sunbeam* has a bigger load than normal as it pauses at Ennis in March '47.

Southern Pacific





An automatic car washer scrubs the Texas dust off coach 450. All cars assigned to the *Sunbeam-Hustler* pool carry a *Daylight*-style nameplate with the *Sunbeam* name.

CLASSIC TRAINS collection



The southbound *Hustler* accelerates out of Dallas in 1950. As on author Morgan's trip, a standard Pacific substitutes for the usual streamlined one on this day's train 16.

R. S. Plummer

water glasses; beyond the wide windows, the limitless reaches of Texas.

The conductor came in, passed a few pleasantries with the steward (whose real challenge is dinner on the crowded *Sunbeam*), then inspected my ticket. Oddly enough, he was only going 34 miles down the line to Ennis, division point and junction with the Fort Worth branch. On the *Sunbeam*, though, the skipper goes right through by special arrangement with the Brother-

hood — an added convenience for the benefit of the faster train's patrons.

A few minutes later, as the *Hustler* glided into Ennis, I spotted a silver-faced 0-8-0. At night the *Owl* patron is able to glimpse the 1898 Cooke 4-4-0 that brings over the Fort Worth connection, and I rather wished that the *Hustler* was able to effect a similar happy circumstance during morning hours.

Ennis now lay behind and the finger bowl had replaced the final cup of coffee. A step

back beyond a swinging door led into the lounge-observation, usually reserved for parlor fares. This trip, however, I fell into conversation with an SP official, and the Ennis conductor overlooked the point rather than break up an earnest discussion. The T&NO man was relating how his road poured \$650,000 into its Dallas-Houston single-track main to make it a *Sunbeam* speedway. The route is known among pensioned rail-roaders as the "Central" because it was originally the Houston & Texas Central, and it was engineered to protect the movement of tonnage trains and passenger schedules that seldom hit over a mile a minute. It was good rail laid on solid ballast and equipped with automatic block signals — but it was not a railroad to carry a streamliner out to beat a bullet like the *Sam Houston Zephyr*.

SP's projected 60-mph average for the *Sunbeam* in early 1937 meant that the new train would have to have the flexibility of an 80-per maximum — either that, or run uncontrollably late and dangerously. SP is first and foremost a safe and dependable carrier, so more than half a million dollars was authorized for line improvements.

This project included a wide range of revisions. Curves were checked and adjusted for proper elevation; 47 miles of new 112-pound rail were spiked home. Flasher signals were installed at principal highway grade crossings. Load after load of new ballast was dumped down and shoveled into place. Even the one element of a main line that might seem minor cause for change to a layman, block signals, had to be altered. At 80 mph a train approaches a yellow block and runs to the following red one at a far more critical level of braking speed than one hitting only 55 or 60. So T&NO engineers relocated 52 signal masts, spacing them out at greater intervals.

OUT OF CORSICANA

It was 9:28 and the *Hustler* was puffing out of Corsicana, crossing the St. Louis Southwestern diamond at the passenger depot. SSW 4-8-4 No. 817 was in sight, sufficient to remind that here was the world's "fastest freight interchange." IV-10, the hot-shot perishable for St. Louis, was still hours away, but Cotton Belt 817 was already in town to take care of that prized assignment.

Mexia was the next stop of note. Here is the terminal of the B-RI's branch from Teague and the northern terminus of the SP's abandoned (in 1933) Mexia-Nelleva Cutoff to Navasota, a Harriman-era project to trim the old Houston & Texas Central mileage to meet Houston & Brazos Valley (now B-RI) competition in 1905. The skeletons of a concrete roundhouse and water tank base are today's lonely reminders of what once was. These structures, the SP man commented, were erected during a short-term oil boom.

Pacific 621 continued her rapid pace to Houston as we snapped around curves that



Alco-GE PA diesels lead the *Hustler* south under the midday sun at Hempstead, 49 miles north of Houston, in July 1951. This day's consist includes a heavyweight baggage car and, in place of the lightweight diner-parlor-observation, another heavyweight car.

Donald Sims

gave the observation car a faint attempt at cracking the whip. Then train 16 was into Bremond and holding the main for its usual meet with the northbound *Hustler*. The fireman of the companion streamliner was up on the Vanderbilt tank of 4-6-2 No. 614, pouring boiler compound in as a foaming preventive. Freight drags behind 2-10-2s were also in town. Traffic was picking up, and I moved to a better chair in the end of the solarium.

At Hearne, 22 miles south, there was more activity at the junction of what SP terms its "Dalsa" (Dallas-San Antonio) line to the Alamo City. What this line lacks in through passenger service is more than made up by the freight tonnage it carries.

But the *Hustler* never pauses for long. It gathered speed with what seemed like unusual rapidity. In minutes a huge silver water tank with the banner WELCOME TO AGGIE-LAND came into view. The *Hustler* was making one of the SP's most important stops, College Station, home of Texas A&M. Here is the nation's largest military college, which

means a student body of roughly 8,000 taught by a faculty numbering 600. Graduation ceremonies were drawing near on the day I rode, and the *Hustler* unloaded a considerable number of parents, relatives, sweethearts, and summer-school students.

Such an institution is a tremendous source of traffic for the railroad, both on scheduled trains and in special movements like football extras. It would seem logical that the *Sunbeam* could run nonstop from Dallas to Houston — logical, that is, to a man from Tennessee or California. Of course, such a practice is quite inconceivable for a Texan as long as College Station means A&M. And T&NO men are definitely Texans in the fullest sense of the word.

Up ahead, Pacific 621 dug her drivers into sanded rail and the *Hustler* moved away from College Station. I reluctantly gave up my observation post to heed the noon lunch call. Once again the diner crew managed to come up with fare suitable for a more sophisticated patronage on a more exclusive route,

say New Haven's Shore Line. Past experience on the T&NO had taught me that its menu was one certain certificate of good eating.

In Navasota, train 16 met a northbound local freight headed by engine 396, a heavy Ten-Wheeler until recently in passenger service. South of town, another southbound freight was waiting in the hole, its 2-8-2 impatient for the yard limits of Houston.

I finished lunch and drifted back to my coach to recline and doze as the *Hustler* reeled off the last few miles into Texas' largest city. Then the streamliner was bending around the curves entering SP's modern Grand Central Station in Houston.

I glanced at timetable arrival time, then at my watch. The *Hustler* was two minutes to the good. ■

DAVID P. MORGAN joined the *TRAINS* magazine staff in 1948, was named editor in 1953, and retired as editor/publisher in 1987. He died in 1990 at age 62. This story's original title was "The Sunbeams Are Hustlers."

TIPPECANOE

GreatTrains IN PHOTOS



The *Tippecanoe*, the Monon's morning train from Chicago to Indianapolis, pulls up to the platform at Hammond, Ind., in fall 1954. Under dynamic President John W. Barriger III, the "Hoosier Line" modernized its passenger service after World War II with diesels and handsomely rebuilt ex-Army hospital cars. The *Tippecanoe's* evening running mate was the *Hoosier*. The road's third major train, the *Thoroughbred*, connected Chicago and Louisville.

A. G. Chione



ELECTROLINER



One of the North Shore Line's two *Electroliner* trains breezes toward Chicago on the high-speed Skokie Valley Route near Sheridan Elms, Ill., on August 11, 1959.

George Krambles, Krambles-Peterson Archive



TRACTION'S finest hour

Two North Shore Line streamliners
would be known as the most successful
interurban equipment in history

BY WILLIAM D. MIDDLETON

For utilities magnate Samuel Insull's Chicago North Shore & Milwaukee Railroad, the Great Depression following the 1929 stock market crash brought uncommonly hard times. In the space of only three years, revenues plummeted to less than half of pre-crash levels, and before the end of 1932 the Insull super-interurban landed in bankruptcy court. The North Shore's recovery was a painfully slow one. Then when conditions finally seemed to be brightening, labor troubles brought a strike in 1938 that shut down the line for 51 days. The road's receivers pondered abandonment of the entire property.

Instead the North Shore elected to undertake a massive program for passenger traffic recovery. Company shops hummed with unaccustomed activity as wholesale numbers of the line's standard steel cars rolled in for improvement and refurbishing. St. Louis Car Co. order books were fattened with a contract for the construction of two new electric streamliners for North Shore's Chicago-Milwaukee service, and the trains would represent the finest achievement in the history of North American electric railway carbuilding.

St. Louis Car faced an extraordinarily difficult set of specifications in construction of the *Electroliners*, as they were to be called. To hold its own in one of America's most highly competitive rail passenger markets, North Shore needed a luxury streamliner that could fully exploit the capabilities of one of the finest high-speed roadbeds in all of traction. Yet the trains had to wend their way docilely through city streets, trolley-car fashion, to reach the North Shore's Milwaukee terminal and had to contend with the restrictions of Chicago's elevated transit system on which minimum radius curves of 90 feet were encountered and high-level platforms limited car width to only 8 feet 8 inches.

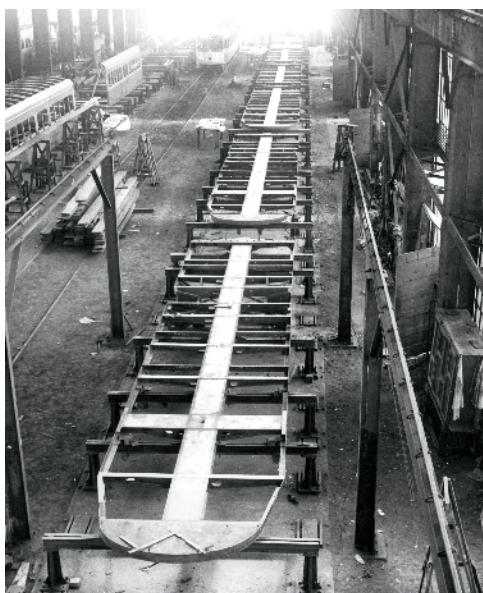
The carbuilder's solution to the design problem was ingenious. The curvature



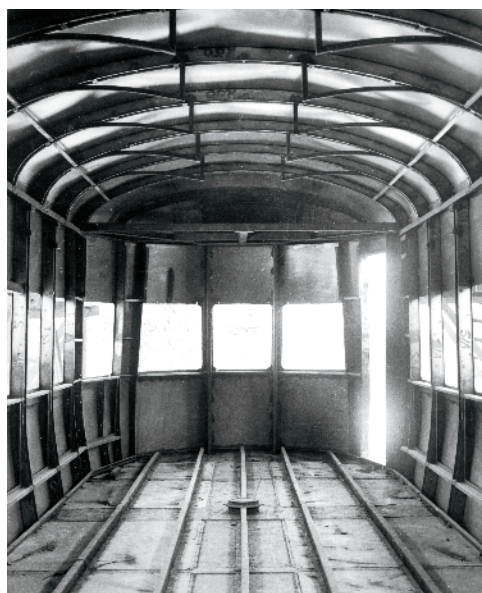


North Shore trains plodded through 2 miles of street running in Milwaukee. Moments into its run to Chicago, a 'Liner rumbles over the 6th Street viaduct on June 4, 1949.

H. M. Stange, Krambles-Peterson Archive



Electroliner underframes rest on stands in the St. Louis Car Co. plant as several PCC streetcars take shape nearby.



Welded high-tensile steel construction provided the *Electroliner* carbodies with great strength at relatively low weight.

Two photos: Kenneth M. Wilkins, John D. Horachek coll.

restrictions were accommodated by designing a four-section articulated train 155 feet 4 inches in length, and the width limitation was overcome by the adoption of a "fishbelly" cross section that bulged out above the platform level to a maximum width of 9 feet 2 inches. Welded high-tensile steel construction held the total weight of each train to slightly more than 105 tons — no more than that of two of the North Shore's standard steel cars.

Roller-bearing-equipped cast-steel trucks were employed, and eight motors totaling 1,000 h.p. provided sufficient power for a free running speed of 85 mph. With the use of field shunting, the trains were capable of more than 100 mph. Electric braking — supplemented by air brakes — was installed, and the "all electric" trains were equipped with electropneumatic controls.

Extensive use was made of rubber cushioning. Carbodies were provided with 3 inches of insulation, and floors were covered with heavy, felt-cushioned rubber tile to provide an unusually low sound level. The air-conditioned trains were provided with high-capac-



St. Louis Car locomotive No. 1 pushes one of the tavern-lounge sections, mounted on shop trucks, inside the plant complex during the *Electroliners*' construction in 1940. Note the ball joint, a feature of the articulated configuration, below the car's end door.

Kenneth M. Wilkins, John D. Horachek collection

ity ventilating systems and electric heating.

Each *Electroliner* offered luxury coach accommodations seating 120 total passengers. Interiors were decorated in color schemes of coral, blue, and silver; scarlet and gray; or apricot and turquoise. One unit of each train had a tavern-lounge section seating 26, where beverage and light meal service was provided. Heavy carpeting was laid on the floor of the tavern-lounge, which was decorated in soft brown, coral, and gold. Fanciful images of red and green birds, giraffes, elephants, and other animals decorated the walls. Waiters were outfitted in special uniforms of British tan and brown.

A BIG WELCOME

Delivered from the builder in early 1941, the *Electroliners* were introduced with extravagant publicity fanfare. An electric WELCOME ELECTROLINERS sign was mounted on the tower of the Milwaukee city hall; banners were placed on the marquees of leading Milwaukee hotels; and 400 Milwaukee streetcars carried signs welcoming the new trains. Huge crowds toured the *Electroliners* during public

exhibitions in principal North Shore cities.

On February 6, 1941, the trains, one operating from Milwaukee and the other from Chicago, made a special trip carrying 27 mayors or community heads from every municipality along the North Shore, numerous other dignitaries, and nearly 50 radio and newspaper representatives. Departure of the special from Milwaukee was celebrated with a ceremonial ribbon-cutting by Mayor Carl Zeidler, who was attended by 28 aldermen and city officials. Shortly before noon the trains met at Glen Flora siding in Waukegan, and the party adjourned to the nearby Glen Flora Country Club for a round of congratulatory speeches and a filet mignon dinner hosted by the railway.

The *Electroliners* entered regular Chicago-Milwaukee service later in the month and set new speed standards on what was already the undisputed speed queen of inter-urban railways. They operated on schedules that allowed as little as 1 hour 40 minutes for the 87-mile journey despite more than a dozen intermediate stops. Between them, the two immensely popular streamliners were scheduled for five daily round trips, representing a daily total of nearly 450 revenue miles per train.

The *Electroliners* had scarcely broken in when the North Shore was hit with an unprecedented surge of wartime passenger traffic. To avoid overtaxing the trains' fixed seating capacity, the North Shore adopted several unusual operating practices. On days of heavy traffic, north-

bound *Electroliner* trips sometimes handled only Kenosha, Racine, and Milwaukee passengers, while a following second section, with standard equipment, made all scheduled stops. Under similar traffic conditions, southbound *Electroliners* sometimes were dispatched from Milwaukee with a capacity load 10 minutes ahead of schedule, operating as a second section of the preceding hourly limited. A train of standard equipment filled the 'Liner schedule. Frequently during the hectic wartime years, the indefatigable streamliners operated an additional Sunday evening trip to help accommodate the throngs of weekend travelers.

On some weekend trips when heavy traffic was a regular occurrence, *Electroliners* skipped stops at such points as Waukegan and North Chicago, with those stations served by a limited train of standard equipment a few minutes behind the 'Liner. This practice was maintained throughout the more than two decades of *Electroliner* operation.

During their North Shore service the *Electroliners* established a phenomenal availability record. With scarcely an interruption, the two trains ripped off their five round trips every day for nearly 22 years, each accumulating a remarkable total of well over 3 million revenue miles and generating about a third of a billion revenue passenger-miles. To maintain the *Electroliners*' high availability, North Shore routinely inspected and serviced the trains with a night crew at Harrison Street shops in Milwaukee during the trains' regular nighttime layover. On the infrequent occasions when a train





On April 14, 1957, an *Electroliner* from Milwaukee enters downtown Chicago at the northwest corner of the elevated rapid-transit structure that forms the "Loop." Very few trains had to cope with the variety of operating conditions faced by the *Electroliners*.

George Krambles, Krambles-Peterson Archive

was laid up for overhaul or major maintenance, its schedules were run by a set of modernized standard coaches and a tavern-lounge car.

Electroliner travel afforded some enduring impressions: Visually the red and green striped trains were an arresting sight, whether trundling down a Milwaukee street, snaking through Chicago L curves, or — best of all — racing along under the high-tension towers and latticework catenary bridges of the North Shore's high-speed Skokie Valley Route. Aboard the air-conditioned, heavily

soundproofed *Electroliners* one felt insulated from the outside world, and from the favored vantage point of one of the front-end seats beside the motorman's cab, the train seemed to float along. Only a peek at the motorman's speedometer was proof that you were really doing 80 mph or better.

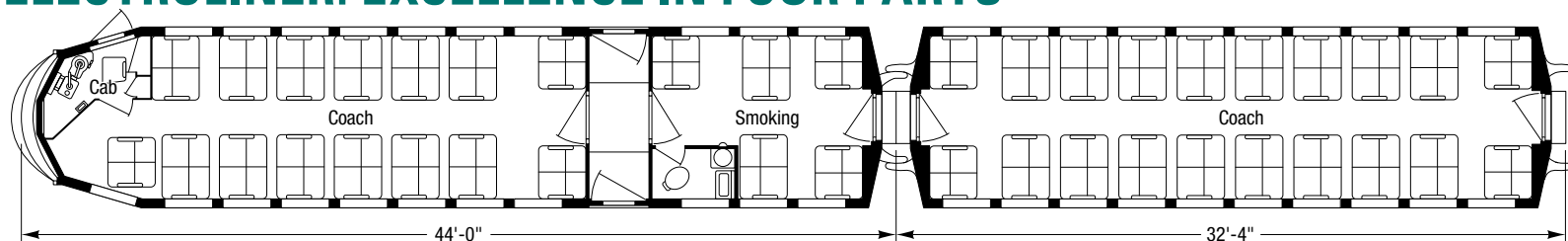
After initially operating with larger crews, North Shore finally settled on a one-man staff for the *Electroliner* tavern-lounge sections, and it was always a delight to observe the dazzling efficiency with which the combination cook-bartender-waiter served up

everything from mixed drinks to apple pie and coffee to a de luxe "Electroburger" from behind his all-electric bar and galley.

NEW HOME IN THE EAST

When economics brought abandonment of the North Shore Line in January 1963, it seemed that all was over for the incomparable *Electroliners*. They joined a forlorn lineup of rolling stock awaiting the scrapper's torch or, at best, honorable retirement at some trolley museum. Then in September 1963 came the happy news that the Philadelphia Suburban

ELECTROLINER: EXCELLENCE IN FOUR PARTS





As the *Electroliners* were high-density trains with maximum journey times of less than 2 hours, their coach seats — although amply upholstered and reversible — did not recline.



The 26-seat tavern-lounge unit featured a variety of seating options. Above the windows, fanciful images of animals that might have been found in a nursery gave the space an informal air.

Two photos: Chicago North Shore & Milwaukee

Transportation Co. ("Red Arrow Lines") had purchased the trains for operation over its Norristown Division, the former Philadelphia & Western Railroad. Soon afterward the *Electroliners* rolled east over the Chicago & North Western and the Pennsylvania Railroad to join the Red Arrow's celebrated Brill "Bullet" fleet on the 13.5-mile third-rail route between Norristown and 69th Street Terminal in suburban Upper Darby, Pa.

PST's Upper Darby shops stripped off old paint, ironed out the accumulated dents, and repainted the streamliners in a new deep-red and white color scheme. Floors were renewed and seats were reupholstered in charcoal, sapphire, gold, black, and rust fabrics. Interior walls were refinished in peach, chocolate, gray, and turquoise, and ceilings were done in bone white. Trolley poles were removed, the Chicago third-rail shoes adapted for PST's third-rail system, and the door arrangement was modified for Red Arrow's lower, limited-length platforms.

A network of speakers for tape-recorded music was installed in each train, and Red Arrow took out a liquor license and laid plans to provide commuters with morning breakfast and afternoon hard liquor from the tavern-lounge section. The refurbishing even extended to new names — the trains were rechristened *Liberty Liners*, and each one got a name, *Valley Forge* and *Independence Hall*.

Finally all was in readiness. On January 31, 1964, the *Liberty Liners* entered regular 69th Street–Norristown service. Suburban Philadelphia had a new standard of commuter service, and electric traction's finest trains were off and running again. ■

WILLIAM D. MIDDLETON, who died in 2011, had more than 80 articles and hundreds of photo credits, including 20 covers, in TRAINS magazine, beginning in the late 1940s. He authored 23 railroad books, many of them standards in their field. A civil engineer by profession, he served 30 years in the U.S. Navy.



After the North Shore closed, the trains went to Red Arrow's Norristown line outside Philadelphia and were renamed *Liberty Liners*. Both are on a superelevated curve at Brookline station on May 2, 1964.

George Krambles, Krambles-Peterson Archive

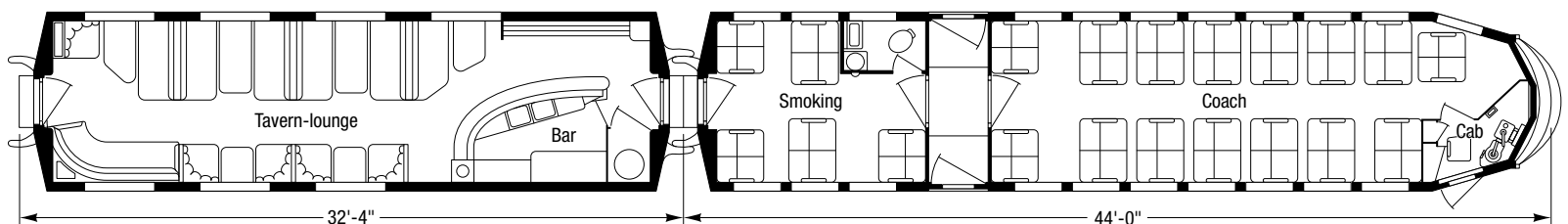


Illustration by Rick Johnson and Allen J. Brewster



Baltimore & Ohio 4-6-2 No. 5304 on the southbound *Cincinnatian* takes water during the station stop at Deshler, Ohio, in 1955. Composed of modernized 1920s-era cars and engines, the train entered Washington–Cincinnati service in January 1947. Low ridership prompted the B&O to change the streamliner's route — but not its name — and the *Cincinnatian* started running out of Detroit on June 25, 1950.

Robert E. Caflisch; Helen Caflisch collection





Tail car *Fountain Square* clears the Pennsylvania's Fort Wayne main line as the northbound *Cincinnati* departs Lima, Ohio, on November 12, 1960. As built, each of the two consists featured a streamlined Pacific, baggage-buffet-lounge car, three coaches, and a diner-lounge-observation; by the 1960s, E units were up front and RPO, baggage, and express cars were carried. The *Cincinnati* survived, in truncated form, until Amtrak.

Tom Gildersleeve

SOUTHERN BELLE

KCS keeps the faith

A unique combination of market conditions
and corporate commitment adds up to quality
passenger service on one road

BY LOUIS A. MARRE



The Kansas City–New Orleans *Southern Belle*, flagship of the Kansas City Southern, rumbles over the Arkansas River at Redland, Okla., on September 16, 1960.
Louis A. Marre





Brand-new Electro-Motive E3 No. 3 (delivered in 1940, renumbered 23 in 1942, rebuilt to an E8M in 1952) poses with a *Southern Belle* consist at Kansas City. The nose emblem bears initials for both Kansas City Southern and subsidiary Louisiana & Arkansas.

Louis A. Marre collection; below, Joe Welsh collection

In the course of his inquest on “Who Shot the Passenger Train?” conducted in April 1959 *TRAINS*, Editor David P. Morgan concluded: “The railroads should preserve such [passenger] volume as is left by all reasonable means. But today cost control comes first. Railroading has reached a point where the high cost of doing a passenger business has robbed it of a profit incentive. And without that incentive (*i.e.*, recovery of full costs plus an opportunity to earn 6 percent or more on the capital involved) the business, regardless of volume, is doomed. As any business would be.”

This summation contains neatly within itself an example of the type of schizophrenia that has infected even the most solemnly objective examiners of the passenger problem. “Preserve existing traffic,” they say, “which is, of course, unprofitable, impractical, and suicidal for any 6 percent profit-making industry.” Thus we continue, motivated no

doubt by laudable nostalgia, to yearn for what we fear common business sense will ultimately deny us — good passenger service.

Some roads seem to reflect this kind of “heart-over-head” philosophy. New Haven ran diners, sleepers, parlors, and club lounges with abandon; Katy dragged lightweight sleepers over rotted ties and broken rails; and New York Central rolled out red carpets in the cavernous gloom of Grand Central Terminal for 20th Century Limited departures.

Then came Judgment Day — total abandonment of passenger service was sought by New Haven, obtained by Katy, and requested, thinly disguised, by the Central. Presumably, similar retrenchments are in the works at other passenger strongholds, for ominous signs proliferate. Decidedly unstreamlined U28C road-switchers with steam

generators pull Santa Fe’s *Texas Chief*; Illinois Central is beginning to cut or combine several trains; and no American road had ordered a long-haul passenger car for three years. Is there no alternative to “varnish — then vanish”? Perhaps there is.



“STREAMLINED HOSPITALITY”

When Kansas City Southern jumped onto the streamliner bandwagon with its 1940 *Southern Belle*, it called this service “Streamlined Hospitality.” The same slogan is still in use, and Nos. 1 and 2 still grace the timecard. Both the train and its slogan have deeper significance today. “Cost control” has eliminated most of the streamliner-era frills, and the hospitality is neither lavish nor luxurious, yet the train does not reflect

the seedy grandeur one has come to expect of redundant “name” trains on other roads. Indeed, the whole image of KCS hospitality is vigorous and proud.

In a letter reproduced in a 1966 KCS public timetable, President W. N. Deramus III notes under the heading “Passenger Business Remains Our Business”:

“You may have heard it said that railroads want to get out of the passenger business — an erroneous conclusion probably based upon the discontinuance of some trains no longer used by the public.

“Here at Kansas City Southern we feel we have an obligation to provide good and ample passenger service to the people of our area. Yet we have reduced the number of our passenger trains since the peak war years — but only after convincing (and costly) proof that you, our patrons, no longer considered the service necessary.

“We have no intention of going out of the passenger business. Rather, we hope to improve our service so that you and others may have the benefit of the safest, most enjoyable, most economical way to travel.

“We earnestly seek your help to this end!”

Performance shows that this is not empty rhetoric. KCS’s passenger traffic department, though reluctant to disclaim *any* passenger deficit, is convinced that Interstate Commerce Commission accounting procedures are not an accurate picture of what really happens when a passenger dollar crosses Kansas City Union Station’s ticket counter. And President Deramus’ observation about the people of his area is not a generalization but a statement of awareness of the peculiar nature of KCS territory that makes its passenger business viable. The quality of the service for which he seeks help has steadily improved in the past decade. This cannot be said categorically of any other major railroad. Although no survey article can attempt to prove or disprove any theories, academic or otherwise, about passenger costs and profits, this one attempts to evaluate the quality of KCS service. If we assume that no company deliberately spends money on a lost cause, then the KCS story may be a glimmer of hope.

Kansas City Southern Lines (including subsidiary Louisiana & Arkansas) operates 1,640 route-miles in Missouri, Kansas, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Texas, and Louisiana. Passenger service consists of two trains each way daily — Nos. 1 and 2, 9 and 10 — on the Kansas City–Shreveport–New Orleans route (865 miles) and one each way daily — Nos. 15 and 16 — between Shreveport and Port Arthur, Texas (230 miles); 9 and 10 connect with 15 and 16. Sleeping-car service is provided on the K.C.–New Orleans trains, and dining-car service is offered on all trains.



Back when most railroads shared KCS’s pro-passenger outlook, cleaners at New Orleans prepare one of the 1940 *Belle* observation cars for its next trip to Kansas City.

Leon Trice

Although 15 and 16 were once the *Flying Crow*, and the slogan “Straight as the Crow Flies” was superimposed on a map of the system, this hardly represents cold facts. KCS’s central section is traversed by a series of engineering improbabilities that betray the hasty construction of the highly speculative parent company, the Kansas City, Pittsburgh & Gulf. Thus KCS is not likely to appear in TRAINS’ annual speed survey, nor does it have selling points comparable to those of a “Water Level Route” or a “Grand Canyon Route.” The 350-plus miles of virtual desolation between Joplin, Mo., and Texarkana, Ark., which included two helper districts in steam days, invites nothing but invidious comparison with similar mileage out of the middle of, say, the Chicago–Cleveland line of NYC. There are no large on-line towns between Joplin and Texarkana.

Yet even with this potential revenue desert occupying a disproportionately large percentage of its territory, KCS passenger

service thrives. No parallel Interstate highways compete for passenger-miles, and no other railroad covets the business. This alone, however, is not sufficient to explain the present high state of the art of running passenger trains on KCS. Other roads have had a virtual monopoly and still declined to run.

FORMULA FOR GROWTH

KCS passenger service owes its present admirable state to decisions and policies made as far back as 1957. In that year the Pullman rates on all trains were adjusted to eliminate first-class fares. Now KCS sleeper patrons pay only coach rate (itself lower than average) plus the standard Pullman Company space charge. This incentive has been little utilized elsewhere in the country — difficult to understand in view of KCS’s results. The load factor for sleeping cars rose from a 50 percent occupancy level to 75 percent, and Pullman deficits were cut in half almost immediately.



Traffic patterns were analyzed at the same time, and abandonment was sought for two trains: a branchline run from Shreveport, La., to Hope, Ark., which lasted until March 3, 1962; and a third mainline train, which was dropped north of Shreveport on January 1, 1958. With remaining service solidified in its present form, an extensive car-rebuilding and purchase program got under way — gradually, so to not overburden the operation's total debt structure. By the end of 1966 the entire car fleet, including regularly assigned head-end cars, was either new or completely rebuilt, most in the past five years.

The principal aim of this program was operating economy. All coaches have had costly window shades eliminated by use of tinted glass. Coach interiors are completely washable, with vinyl seat covers, tile floors, integral-color Formica walls, and high-intensity fluorescent lighting. Mechanical maintenance has been simplified with such items as air-cooled condensers on refrigeration equipment, disc brakes, and non-retractable steps. Borrowing a good idea from the Wabash, KCS installed angle-iron "fenders" along the bottom edges of baggage and Railway Post Office carbodies to keep baggage wagons from scarring the paint.

Both the passenger and the mechanical departments keep eyes open for bargains in cars and equipment, and as a result, some significant savings have been made. In 1962, the road bought four observation-lounge cars from New York Central and rebuilt them as tavern-grill-observations, the first two for

trains 15 and 16; two more came in 1964. When the Frisco drastically cut its dining-car service, KCS virtually cleaned out that road's commissary of utensils and other supplies at bargain-basement rates. Five EMD E7s were obtained from Maine Central, which went freight-only in 1960; they replaced KCS's last two aging E3s and its sole remaining E6.

At the same time equipment was being systematically upgraded, the passenger traffic people were selling their product. KCS advertises continuously and conspicuously in on-line newspapers (and in *TRAINS*), and

actively solicits school tours, resort traffic, and family-rate and other special groups. When Missouri Pacific abandoned service to Hot Springs National Park, for example, KCS organized bus service to the Arkansas spa from its nearest station, and advertised package tours in conjunction with local hotels. When Southern Pacific downgraded its *Sunset Limited*, KCS went after New Orleans traffic from West Coast points via Kansas City. Improbable as this sounds, it worked. One large Mardi Gras group that had used SP for 17 years came over enthusiastically to



A heavy Christmas-season consist obliges the assignment of four units — two Fs and two Es — to the northbound *Belle*, stopped at Sallisaw, Okla., on December 21, 1963.

Mike Condren



Bound for Kansas City, E8 No. 26 rambles north of Heavener, Okla., with the north-bound *Southern Belle* in December 1962.

J. David Ingles

“Streamlined Hospitality.” Other notable special moves have included the longest train ever to operate out of Kansas City Union Station — a 31-car Shrine special — and a 21-car football extra to the 1965 Sugar Bowl in New Orleans. So successful were these two that repeat business was scheduled almost immediately: KCS delivered 21 cars of Shriners to the Rock Island at Howe, Okla., in September 1966, and 13 cars of Sugar Bowl traffic swelled the consists of No. 1 and No. 16 over New Year’s 1967.

A HEALTHY STATE

However interesting, or even spectacular, special moves may be, it is in day-to-day operation that a passenger fleet must justify itself. Let’s look at this in detail to comprehend its healthy state.

On a typical day in summer 1966, equipment assignments for KCS’s passenger operation were as follows:

Nos. 1 and 2: Two E units; one 85-foot lightweight baggage car (built 1965); baggage-RPO-dorm (rebuilt 1965); 270-class coach (radio-equipped, built 1965); 260-class coach (rebuilt 1964); diner-lounge; and 14-section 4-double-bedroom Pullman (rebuilt 1967). Two sets.

Nos. 15 and 16: North of Shreveport, two E units; three lightweight baggage cars; one RPO (rebuilt 1965); one “14&4” Pullman; one 270-class coach; one 260-class coach; one



E3 No. 21 (top, at K.C. in the early ‘60s) was built in September 1938 as Electro-Motive demonstrator No. 822; it became KCS No. 1 in July ‘39, then KCS 21 in ‘42. Locomotive No. 12 (above, on train 10 at Shreveport in July ‘66), is one of five E7s whose acquisition from Maine Central enabled KCS to retire its last three pre-war E3 and E6 units.

Top, Jim McClellan; above, J. David Ingles

40-class tavern-grill-observation (ex-NYC, rebuilt 1963). Two sets.

No. 9 or 10: One E unit; one lightweight baggage car; one RPO; one 270-class coach; one 40-class tavern-grill-observation. One set.

Nos. 15 and 16: South of Shreveport, one E unit; one baggage car; one RPO; one 270-class coach; one 50- or 40-class tavern-grill-observation. Two sets.

These assignments account for 10 of the 11 E units, leaving one spare plus 11 F3 and F7 units with steam generators that can be used.

Given this basic set of requirements, the

road must meet contingencies with a pool of three extra Pullmans (one each at Kansas City, Shreveport, and New Orleans), one spare diner, one spare grill-observation, and 10 coaches at most. The 1965 order to Pullman-Standard for 10 new coaches of the 270 class was intended to retire four 1937 economy “American Flyer” coaches and to leave a margin of 5 or so extras, yet KCS has consistently borrowed equipment from other carriers to keep up with increased traffic. Equipment seems to generate demand for itself in a progressive fashion. Sports specials, school



A model poses in a roomette on one of KCS's postwar 14&4 sleepers. In the 1960s, as some railroads took over operation of their trains' sleeping cars, KCS chose to remain with the Pullman Company, whose pool of cars enabled the road to handle traffic surges.

Chicago Photographers

tours, excursions — all demand more cars than KCS can supply after these groups have been introduced to their amenities. When the new coaches became available, the passenger department took a gamble on school outings in the New Orleans, Baton Rouge, and Shreveport areas. These accounted for over \$47,000 in additional revenue in the 1965–66 school year, and only a shortage of equipment keeps the road from tapping enormous potential markets in the Kansas City area. Obviously the lowly coach can generate more traffic, even if of merely miscellaneous character, than it has been given full credit for.

Spare sleeping cars are scarce on KCS, if not for precisely the same reasons that keep the coach pool pumped dry. The unpredictable demands of troop movement account for most of the operating headaches in this category, particularly since the moves tend to

be one way at one time, and the other way at another time. Troop movement to Fort Polk, near Leesville, La., is usually handled in regular trains by the addition of one or two Pullmans, but occasionally a solid troop extra is required. In such cases, KCS draws from the Pullman pool, which is one good reason for the road's continued allegiance to that company while others have chosen to run their own sleepers.

Extra diners can be borrowed from Kansas City connections, but rental is expensive and KCS tries to use its own. Some operating ploys had to be worked out to take advantage of the observation-grill cars, which are most readily available. Their interior arrangement, which permits expansion from the normal one-man crew to three without difficulty, has made them indispensable. By coupling one to the front of No. 15, and following it with

the sleepers for troops, then with the regular sleeper, plus two coaches and the assigned 40-class observation-grill, traffic through the train to the rear-end diner is kept to regular passengers only. If two full diners are needed, they are put back-to-back between the troop section and regular section, which has the same effect. This type of experience with extraordinary demands, coupled with a willingness to work out systematic plans for coping with them, proves invaluable when an affair such as the monster Shriners special gets under way. That 31-car Gargantua made the entire trip from K.C. to New Orleans and back without a delay or a single hitch.

TWO LOGICAL COURSES

Since troop movements and special traffic will continue to make heavy demands for Pullmans, it seems logical that two courses



Diner No. 58 *Mountain Lodge* (top), built by ACF in 1949, is in the southbound *Belle* at Howe, Okla., on December 30, 1962; the car lost its name as part of a 1965 rebuilding. Coach 275 (above) stands at Shreveport in July '66, the year after its construction by Pullman-Standard as part of the last pre-Amtrak batch of intercity passenger cars.

Two photos, J. David Ingles

must be followed that are out of fashion in most of the industry:

(1) Keep affiliation with the Pullman Company, thereby avoiding a good deal of maintenance expense and obviating the necessity of keeping long lines of seldom-used cars standing around.

(2) Hold the fare attractively low, and advertise this so the operation during normal periods contributes as much as possible to the gross. As a corollary, it is wise to not be above selling seat space in Pullmans in lieu of parlor-car seats; to advise dining-car staffs that a little "extra" for passengers coming from the sleepers is good public relations; even to blazon the names of past KCS presidents on the sides of those cars. And, of course, keep everything glistening inside and out. The Pullmans have come up for their turn at complete rebuilding and are going through the process two at a time. First-class service without the frills and pomposity of extra fares will keep those cars averaging 75 percent occupancy. Even the most sanguine observer does not hope to find Pullmans 100 percent full.

The dining-car philosophy has also been realistically adjusted to meet current needs. Because all KCS trains deal in relatively long

hauls, some kind of dining-car service will always be necessary. After deciding that the notorious \$2.50 diner hamburger achieved neither revenue, good will, nor nourishment, the Dining Car Department resolved that if the service could pay its own way "above the wheels" (i.e., reimburse food and labor costs while providing good but not fancy service), it was justified. Strict economy was necessary.

The purchase of the NYC observation-lounges, converted to tavern-grill-observations, led things off. These cars were assigned to trains 15-16 and 9-10, replacing original 1940 *Southern Belle* observation cars, which had been rebuilt to similar configuration, and also conventional diners. A spare was kept at Kansas City, since the extra traffic for which it was employed usually originated there. Full diners for the *Belle* were reorganized for waiter-in-charge service (dispensing with the steward position) and rebuilt to the same interior and exterior standards as the coaches.

The response has been equivalent to that elicited by the new coaches: KCS feeds more than 75 percent of its passengers vs. an industry average of less than half that. Not only do the diners and tavern-grill-observations pay the "above-the-wheels" costs, but they've

KCS'S PASSENGER-CAR INVENTORY

CAR TYPE	CAR NOS.	TOTAL CARS	
Baggage and express	14-29	16	
	80-85	6	
	400, 401, 403	3	
	36017, 36148	2	
Mail-baggage-express	6	1	Ex-CGW, used as spare
	30-33	4	
	34, 68-69	3	Dormitory space
Chair-coach	251-266	16	
	270-279	10	Blt. 1965; radio; one on all trains
Grill-lounge-observation	40-43	4	Ex-NYC; acquired 1961
	44-45	2	Ex-NYC; acquired 1966
Diner-lounge	50, 52	2	
Tavern-observation	54-55	2	To be retired 1967
Names: <i>Good Cheer, Hospitality</i>			
Diner	57-58	2	
Sleeper	—	8	Owned by Pullman Company; 14 rmte, 4 dbl bdr
Names: <i>Job Edson, Leonor Loree, Harvey Couch, Colonel Fordyce, Stuart Knott, Arthur Stilwell, William Buchanan, William Edenborn</i>			

TOTAL REVENUE EQUIPMENT: 81 CARS

been contributing modestly to total maintenance at an average of \$750 per month. The extra seating in the observation section has also proven valuable for short-haul and dead-head passengers. KCS, believing strongly in its own image, had the stainless-steel sheathing of the NYC cars specially processed so that its own black, silver, red, and yellow livery could be applied. The exterior appearance of the trains to which these cars are assigned is stunning.

Bar service is, of course, highly lucrative, even though it is permitted only in Missouri and Louisiana. Travelers, who are usually ignorant of such esoteric rules, become adept



A handsome train even without an observation car, the New Orleans-bound *Southern Belle* leaves the Arkansas River bridge south of Redland, Okla., on March 9, 1963. Behind E8 No. 25 are a baggage car, baggage-RPO-dorm, two coaches, diner, sleeper, and coach.

Mike Condren



Hospitality, an original 1940 *Southern Belle* tavern-observation car, is on the end of Shreveport-Port Arthur train 15 at Mansfield, La., in mid-1966, a year before retirement.

J. David Ingles

at the subtleties of noting where the train is and when the next round will be allowed.

Mail and express traffic is important, especially in the absence of direct competition. Although all RPO service is under a cloud of eventual abandonment by the Post Office Department, it seemed sufficiently guaranteed of life in KCS territory to justify the rebuilding of the RPO-dorm cars in 1965. KCS operates six RPOs and does not foresee any cutback in the next four years.

In view of the lack of Interstate highways paralleling KCS's route, and the withdrawal of some express firms, the railroad expects its express traffic to continue, and there is some evidence it is improving. In this area, where the future of traffic depends on external decisions, KCS has at least had the satisfaction of knowing and showing that it has "done it right" to date. The head end of the *Belle* is not the collection of derelicts usually found separating power from varnish; every car is lightweight, as clean and de luxe as the

Pullmans, and equipped with disc brakes. Indeed, most KCS consists have disc brakes throughout, and how many roads can say this today?

SMART NEW COACHES

"Low fares fill coaches" is one axiom of KCS philosophy, and the growth of the road's long-haul coach traffic seems to justify it. Better than half the passenger mileage is over 200 miles, and the trend is upward. In the first five months of 1965, the average haul per passenger was 242.6 miles; for the corresponding 1966 period it rose to 271.1. The 1965 delivery of the 10 P-S coaches was the only one made for long-haul cars to a domestic carrier for two years. The cars came with a small conductor's office in one end (no more lights and noise to disturb passengers during a 2 a.m. mail stop) that was fitted with two-way train radio. Operating rules require one of these cars to be included in every consist, making easier the conductor's awareness of operating conditions. These "radio coaches," plus a new systemwide microwave message network, give the operating department great control over communication and safety. In one stroke, KCS improved its long-haul capability and its operating efficiency.

Increase in long-haul traffic has been due in large part to KCS's efforts to attract it, but there is another dimension to this growth not amenable to internal policymaking and control — failure of connecting roads to keep up their service. Often this has benefited the survivors (KCS's capitalization on MoPac's Hot Springs traffic, for example), but there are problems. Southbound traffic has become heavier than northbound traffic through lack of connections at the south end. Other developments have turned out more favorably, among them Texas & Pacific moving its depot from downtown Shreveport to a desolate prairie 5 miles out. T&P's simultaneous shuffling of schedules now allows KCS to long-haul T&P-MP passengers to Texarkana for northern points instead of transferring them at Shreveport. But as connections disappear from timetables, particularly in MP or SP territory, the future of any bridge traffic dims.

The largest single source of connecting passengers on the north end is the Union Pacific-Norfolk & Western *City of St. Louis*, and any abandonment or alteration in this operation would jeopardize the considerable flow of West Coast-to-New Orleans traffic KCS has picked up in SP's default. KCS's willingness to adjust to connecting traffic is evident in the policy which will hold the *Southern Belle* at K.C. for the *City of St. Louis*'s arrival for 10 minutes under any conditions, and



Ex-NYC grill-lounge-observation No. 44 (top) has been relettered for KCS but is still in bare stainless steel at Kansas City on September 17, 1961; it would become No. 43. Sister 42 (above) is in full KCS dress at New Orleans on February 20, 1966. These cars provide food service on trains 9-10 and 15-16, while the flagship *Belle* has a full diner.

Top, Louis A. Marre; above, John S. Ingles

longer for unusual ones. This accommodating attitude, though, is useless after a point of diminishing returns is reached — when the drying up of competition no longer throws traffic to a road trying to stay in business but actually cuts it off.

As long as Kansas City Union Station avoids becoming a museum, the railroad with the black cars will continue to make passengers a business, as it does today. Timetables are rational attempts to distribute the service for day and night travel, unlike those that contain such inexplicable examples as Pennsy's two trains from St. Louis 2 hours apart. The road's system timetable is not, as with so many others, an excuse to stuff piggyback timetables and freight offices into print, nor is it a pitiful shadow of faded glory on cheap paper with an irrelevant cover photo. It contains "passenger train information," just as it says. KCS will make getting there easier, such as adding an extra shuttle coach to No. 1 and No. 2 on weekends, so that the short-haul traffic to Joplin and back won't disrupt the long-haul passenger coaches. Connecting company-run buses will continue to tap off-line

but nearby sizeable towns such as Fort Smith, Ark., and Lake Charles, La. Special traffic will be continually solicited to fill and pay for new equipment. Passenger agents will dutifully attend every terminal departure.

Thus, the imminent retirement of the only remaining piece of 1940 *Southern Belle* equipment, the venerable tavern-lounge-observation *Hospitality*, does not mean that the company is abandoning the principle for which it named the car. A new streamlined car, which will undoubtedly prolong the tradition, if not the name, will take its place. Any inquest into the death of the passenger train was, at least insofar as the inhabitants of Amsterdam, Mo., and Zwolle, La., are concerned, decidedly premature. ■

LOUIS A. MARRE is retired from a career as a Professor of English at the University of Dayton. A native of Fort Smith, Ark., he is the author of numerous books and articles on railroads and diesel locomotives. This story originally appeared under the title of "About the Railroad Whose President Says, 'We have no intention of going out of the passenger business.'" Two years after publication, KCS went freight-only on November 9, 1969, a move prodded by the universal loss of the mail business and the downgrading of UP-N&W's Kansas City services.



LAKER

GreatTrains IN PHOTOS



In 1951, as railroads were buying fleets of new streamlined cars, Soo Line took a different tack. Trains 17-18 between Chicago and Duluth-Superior were named *Laker*, and their World War I-era cars were modernized internally. Except for Pullman pool sleepers, and Soo's two lightweight baggage cars, the *Laker* was all-heavy-weight until it quit on January 15, 1965. Two GP9s and an F7B are eastbound with 18 cars at Forest Park, Ill., in August 1958.

George Speir



Some 23 years earlier at Forest Park, the consist of No. 18 behind Soo 4-6-2 No. 2717 looks much the same on July 18, 1935. The Wisconsin workhorse carries coaches and sleepers from the Twin Cities and Duluth-Superior plus a sleeper from Ashland, Wis. The drumhead reads CHICAGO MILWAUKEE DULUTH SUPERIOR; at this time a connecting train took passengers to Milwaukee, soon replaced by an inter-urban ride from Soo's Waukesha station.

Two photos: A. W. Johnson, Krambles-Peterson Archive

HIAWATHAS

Hiawathas

AT NEW LISBON

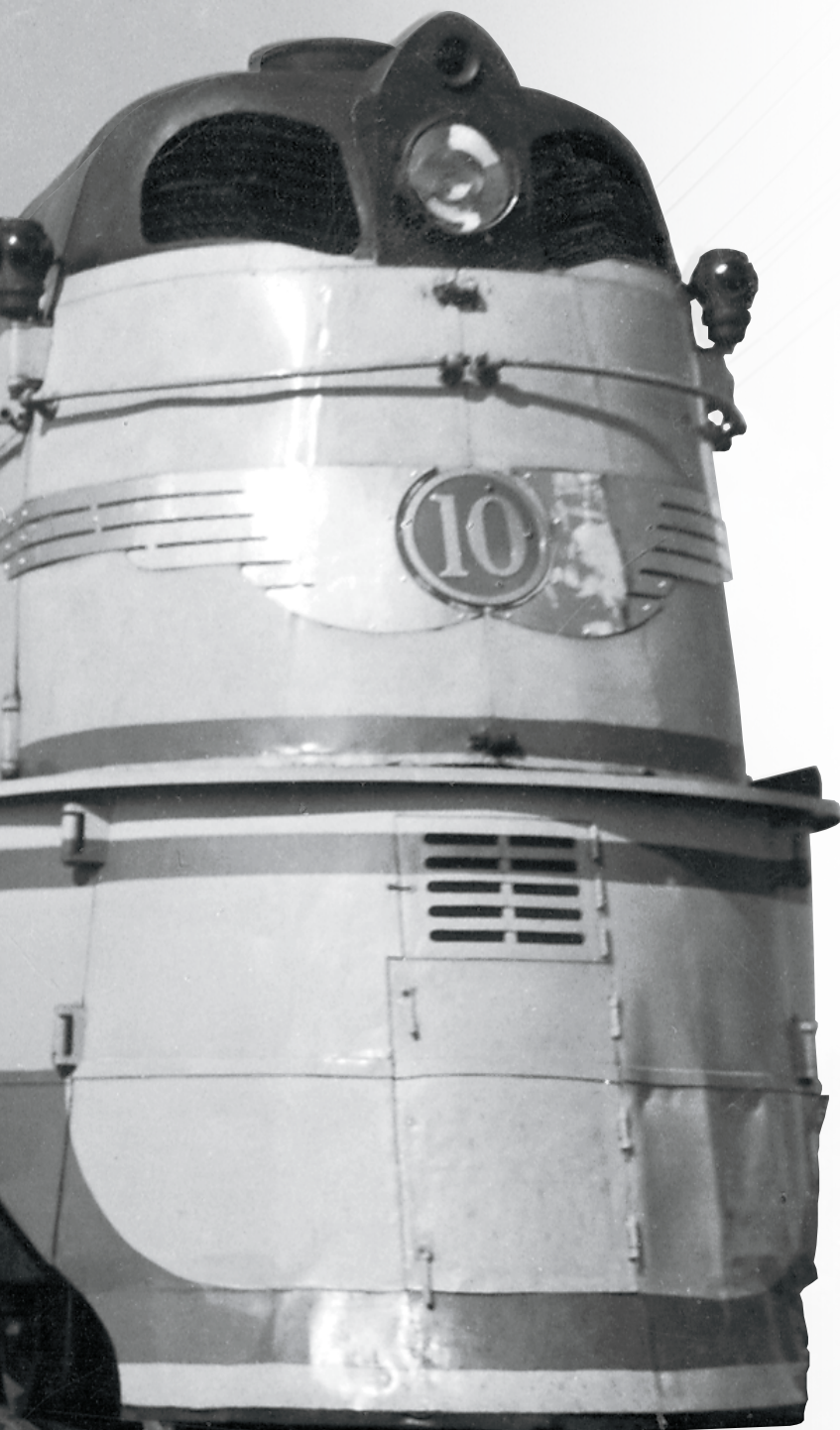
When three steam-powered Milwaukee Road streamliners meet at a single point, there's bound to be real activity

BY JOHN F. BOOSE

PHOTOS BY LINN H. WESTCOTT



Train time at New Lisbon! The convergence of *Hiawathas* begins as train 200, the inbound *North Woods Hiawatha*, eases onto the east leg of the wye as its conductor walks down the west leg. The five-car train will soon back into a track at the depot.



A rustic sign at the New Lisbon depot told passengers on mainline trains that this where they could catch a train to the lake-and-forest area of Wisconsin known as the North Woods.

Picture a lazy summer afternoon in the “driftless area” of western Wisconsin, where the lack of Ice Age glacial activity has left the landscape flat: temperature high, humidity high, big bulbous clouds barely moving in a pale blue sky. In this scene, on nearly level ground, is New Lisbon. It is on the double-track main line of the Milwaukee Road, 221 miles west of Chicago and 200 miles east of Minneapolis, elevation 894 feet above sea level.

New Lisbon's depot is a sturdy stucco-covered structure on the north side of the 132-pound rails; eastward from the bay window one looks beyond the platform shelters down a long straight roadbed toward Mauston, 7 miles. Just past the first grade crossing, tended by a jovial man wearing dark glasses and a safety belt studded with red reflectors, is a large coaling stage on the north side of the tracks. While not visible from the station window, north of the coal tower is the wye connecting the main line to the Wisconsin Valley branch. A two-stall enginehouse sits in the center of the wye. Walk out onto the main platform and look west. There too is a long tangent, and a smaller coal dock, but the main line makes a slight bend to the south through the station area.

It's now 3:05 p.m. and Extra 373 West has just arrived with 107 cars of freight. A few minutes before, it was pounding through the scrub forests near Wisconsin Dells at 35 mph; now the engine, a class L3 heavy Mikado, has pulled ahead for coal, again for water, and is about to put the cars into a siding west of the depot to make way for the *Hiawathas*.

Smoke down the line to the west heralds the approach of Extra 220 East, 127 cars doubleheaded with another L3 and No. 220, one of the Milwaukee's new S2 4-8-4s, fast and powerful. There's just



Engine 10, having backed its train from the North Woods into the station, has cut away for servicing. Men load a crated stone monument for a northern Wisconsin city into the baggage car.

Passengers await the two mainline *Hiawathas* while the power from Extra 220 East has left its freight train in the distant sidings to take coal. The North Woods cars are by the depot at right.

time for the engines to be coaled and watered and get back to their train, which they left in a siding west of town, by 3:35, when the *North Woods Hiawatha*, train 200 from Minocqua, 168 miles to the north, whistles for the U.S. 16 highway crossing just north of the wye.

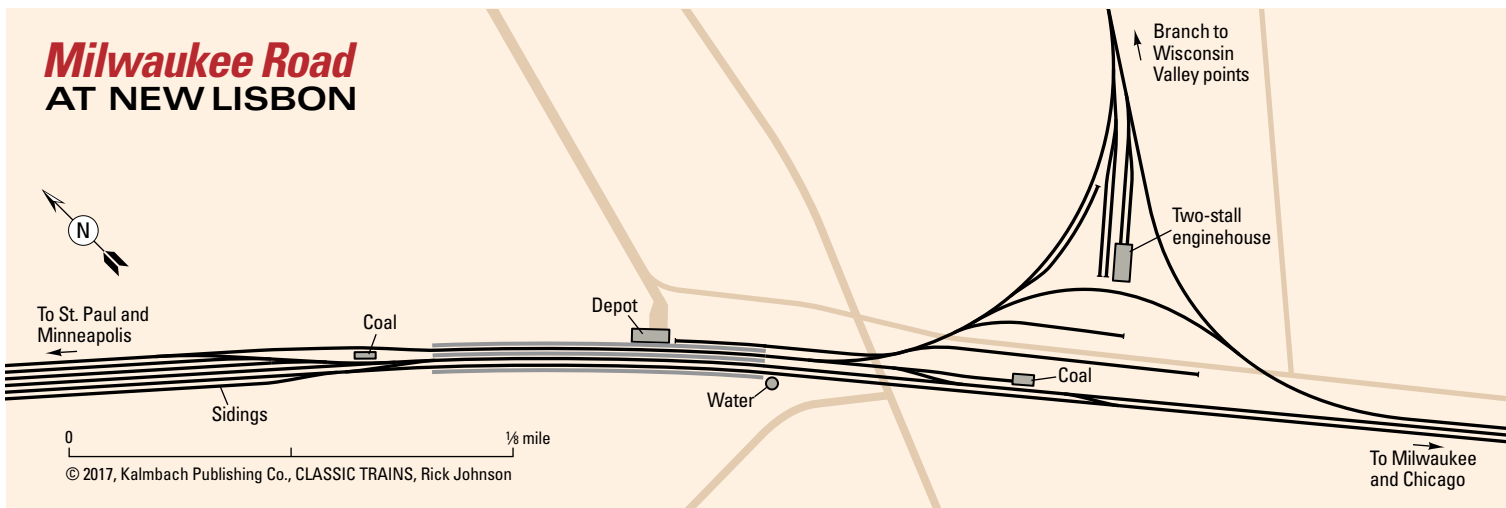
OPENING NOTE TO A SHOW

That whistle, a piercing air horn to be exact, marks the beginning of passenger-train activity hard to match anywhere, let alone in a rural town of 1,000 citizens. At 3:45 the *North Woods Hi* backs into a side track north of the main line and passengers pile out. The people walk across the tracks to the south platform to await the *Afternoon Hiawatha*, train 100 for Milwaukee and Chicago, at 4:01. In the meantime another eastbound, No. 58, a 10-car local mail, baggage, and express train with one coach, pulls in, does its station work, and backs into one of the sidings west of the depot, where it will wait before continuing eastward at 4:10.

If you've followed the movements this far, you'll note that 58 and Extras 373 West and 220 East are all "in the hole" west of the depot. Train 200, the *North Woods Hi*, has arrived from the north and is now standing, nose-east, at the station, ready to become 201 for its return trip up the Wisconsin Valley line. A crew of men is busy checking engine 10, the streamlined Ten-Wheeler that is used on the Valley line because the track just isn't built for larger engines, and this tributary *Hiawatha* is not a big train. The most noticeable work going on about the engine is the use of an Alemite gun to lubricate the side rods and valve motion. No. 10 is an unusual engine; I'll tell you about it while we wait for the *Afternoon Hi*.

In 1899, Baldwin started building a series of Vauclain Compounds,





Crewmen use an Alemite gun, a noisy device powered by air from the locomotive, to lubricate the rods of the *North Woods Hiawatha's* Ten-Wheeler. Out of sight on the other side of the engine, the *Afternoon Hi* slips unheard into the station.



With passengers discharged and boarded, and its 4-4-2 lubed and watered, the *Afternoon Hiawatha* resumes its dash to Chicago.



Moments after train 100 departs, a 4-6-4 passes the coaling stage east of the station with *Afternoon Hi* 101 to Minneapolis. At left, the 4-6-0 backs onto train 201 for the North Woods.

engines with two high- and two low-pressure cylinders, for the then Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul. Most were delivered late the next year, numbered 300 to 325, class B3. No. 315 was to become our present No. 10 and 306 became its sister, No. 11. They were renumbered 1615 and 1606 in 1906, 4225 and 4206 in 1913, and when the compound arrangement was no longer desirable they were rebuilt as class G6ps and got their fourth road numbers, 2769 and 2765 . . . and that's how they remained for a quarter century. Then in 1936 and '37, respectively, the two middle-aged 4-6-0s were taken to the locomotive fountain of youth, emerging streamlined as Nos. 10 and 11, looking like junior versions of the original *Hiawatha* engines, the class A Atlantics.

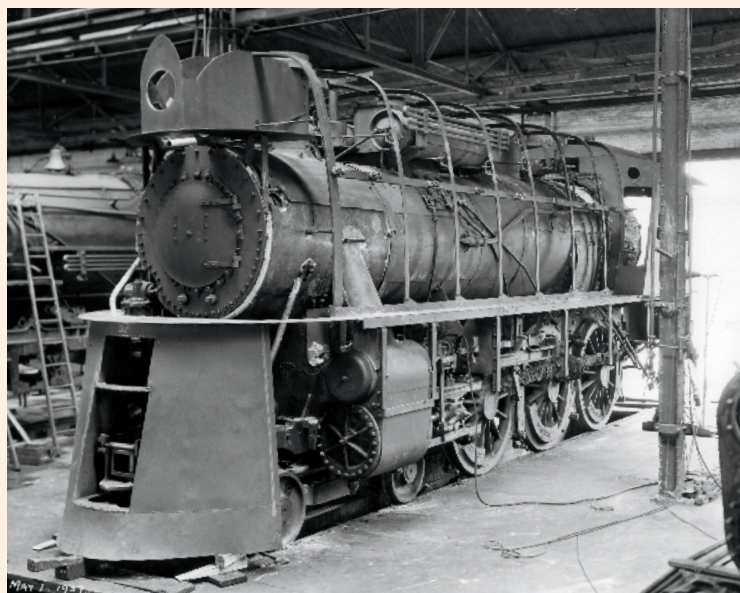
By golly, that eastbound *Afternoon Hiawatha* has sneaked into the station so quietly we didn't even hear it. The Alemite gun is already doing its chugging, and the water crane has been swung over the tender of class A No. 3. The train has run 200 miles in 3½ hours, including the half hour between Minneapolis and St. Paul Union Depot and with three intermediate stops.

Passengers steadily file into the orange-and-maroon coaches, kept cool by the machinery hidden in long channels under the cars. In about 4 minutes the engine is greased and watered. The exhaust barks as the 4-4-2 starts smoothly and approaches the grade crossing. By the time the "beavertail" observation car passes, it is going at a good clip. Before the semaphore behind train 100 rises to its 45-degree caution position, No. 101, the westbound *Afternoon Hiawatha*,

HIAWATHA STEAM SAMPLER



CLASS A 4-4-2: Nos. 1–4, built 1935–37 for the Chicago–Minneapolis *Hiawathas*; No. 3 stands at Milwaukee in 1939. R. H. Kindig



CLASS G 4-6-0: Nos. 10–11, built 1900, rebuilt 1936–37 for the *North Woods Hiawatha*. CLASSIC TRAINS collection

Four types of streamlined steam locomotives were regularly assigned to *Hiawatha* trains. The 4-4-2s and 4-6-4s were modern, high-performance designs created specifically for the Chicago–Minneapolis trains; they were streamlined as they were built at Alco. The others were older 4-6-0s and 4-6-2s to which the Milwaukee applied shrouding to match the newer power. (Besides those pictured, MILW had one other class of streamlined steam engines, F2 4-6-2s Nos. 810 and 812, built in 1912 and rebuilt in 1941 for the Sioux Falls section of the *Midwest Hiawatha*.)



CLASS F7 4-6-4: Nos. 100–105, built 1938 for the Chicago–Minneapolis *Hiawathas*. Robert A. Caflisch; Helen Caflisch collection



CLASS F1 4-6-2: Nos. 151–152, built 1910, rebuilt 1941 for the *Chippewa* (later called *Chippewa Hiawatha*). J. David Ingles collection



Hiawatha 101's engine takes fuel from the west-end coal dock as local train 58 pulls into the station and 201 is readied for departure.



While 58 does its station work at left, the *North Woods Hi* pulls out for Wisconsin Valley and "Up North" points. It's 4:15 p.m., 30 minutes after New Lisbon's *Hiawatha* show began.

appears over the rise near Mauston. Meantime, express men have been loading a huge granite memorial stone into the baggage car of the *North Woods Hi*, express charge \$116 Chicago to Wausau.

No. 101 is headed by a class F7 4-6-4, Milwaukee Road's newest group of passenger locomotives. They are streamlined and painted differently from the A and G classes and are fast becoming a favorite on the system. As 101 pulls out to the west, 58 will move out of the siding to the station platforms, and the *North Woods Hi*, now train No. 201, will start around the wye for points north.

SUMMER TRAFFIC SURGE

Last summer there was so much traffic that the North Woods cars ran through to and from Chicago. They were pulled to Chicago ahead of the regular *Hiawatha* by the locomotive from 58. That left 58 stranded in the siding with no engine for a while, but the situation was relieved by turning the engine that brought the North Woods cars from Chicago and using it for 58. This double play with motive power gave just the extra minutes needed for servicing both engines.

After engine 10 leaves with train 201 for the north, the two extra freights pull out, and the watchman finally is able to sit down in his chair and lean back against the shanty — a welcome rest after nearly an hour of hopping up and down to warn traffic with his stop disk. Except for freight moves, the next scheduled train is at 1:53 a.m.

Most of this activity can be seen without more of a stop than that

NEW LISBON, 1967



With a Skytop parlor-obs car on the rear, the eastbound *Afternoon Hiawatha* departs as the now-nameless North Woods train waits.



Into the station comes the westbound *Afternoon Hi*, across the platform from the two-car connecting train. Three photos, Jim Boyd

The daily convergence of *Hiawathas* at New Lisbon was a ritual that endured for more than a quarter century. In June 1967, after steam had yielded to diesel, yellow had replaced orange and maroon on the Milwaukee's passenger cars, and the Wisconsin Valley train had lost its *Hiawatha* name, noted photographer Jim Boyd traveled to the small Wisconsin town to see the show.



As the eastbound *Hi* arrives, RS3 No. 466 stands with the North Woods train on the same track used by 4-6-0 No. 10 in 1941.

made by Minneapolis–Chicago train 58, so on your next ride over the Milwaukee between these cities, depart 2 hours earlier on 58 instead of the *Afternoon Hiawatha*, hop off at New Lisbon, and take in the show. Train 58 does not carry a diner, so unless you plan to eat instead of watch trains during the half-hour stop at New Lisbon, you should make other arrangements.

Should you be driving through central Wisconsin, the territory near New Lisbon offers other railroad attractions in addition to fine scenery. Elroy, about 18 miles south-southwest, is a junction on Chicago & North Western's main line between Chicago and the Twin Cities via Madison. About the same distance northwest is Wyeville

on C&NW's main line via Milwaukee. Over this trackage runs the *Twin Cities 400*. Through this area and a little to the west are dozens of photogenic settings for railroad pictures. Don't overlook the excellent possibilities for speed shots of the mainline *Hiawathas* east or west of New Lisbon, or of the North Woods train on the Valley line. ■

JOHN F. BOOSE was identified as a mortician living in La Grange, Ill., in a note accompanying his first *TRAINS* article, which was in the December 1940 issue; his byline appeared three subsequent times. LINN H. WESTCOTT held various posts on the *TRAINS* and *MODEL RAILROADER* staffs between 1935 and 1977; he died in 1980.

MAPLE LEAF

GreatTrains IN PHOTOS





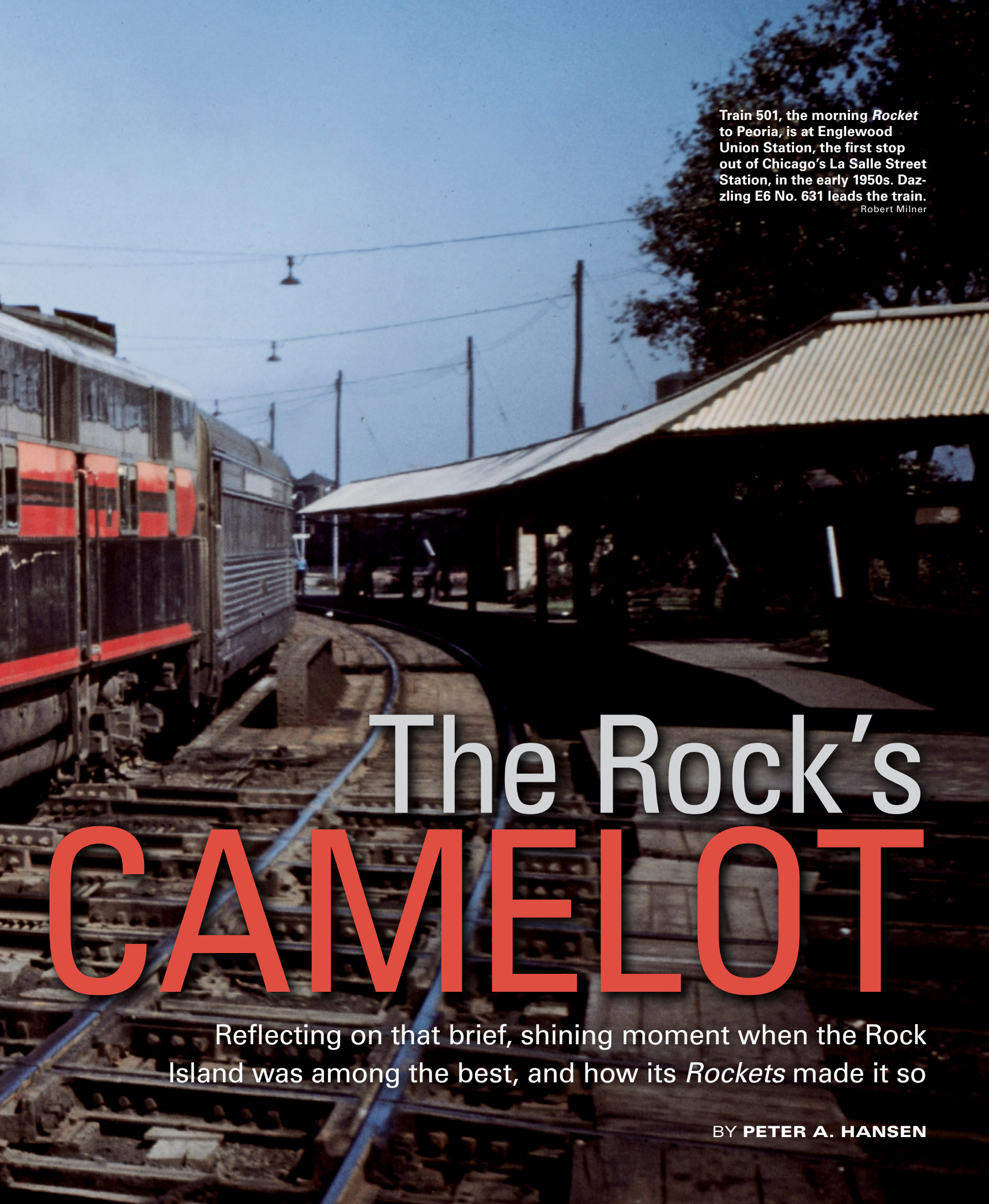
At approximately 4 p.m. one day in the early 1940s, the platform at Durand (Mich.) Union Station teems with servicemen and civilians as the *Maple Leaf* waits to resume its run east. The top train on this route was the *International Limited*; it crossed Michigan by night. Nearly a decade after the first diesel streamliners hit the rails, most North American passenger trains were still heavyweight, steam-powered affairs like this one.

Burdette Shattuck

The Grand Trunk Western-Canadian National *Maple Leaf* was for decades a Chicago-Toronto-Montreal train whose westbound counterpart had a different name. In 1966 a Toronto-Chicago train pair got the name, and here's GTW GP9 No. 4912 on the westbound *Maple Leaf* at Cassopolis, Mich., in July '70. GTW made news in 1967 when it launched the Detroit-Chicago *Mohawk*, but by 1972 the road's only passengers were Detroit commuters.

William M. Scott





Train 501, the morning *Rocket* to Peoria, is at Englewood Union Station, the first stop out of Chicago's La Salle Street Station, in the early 1950s. Dazzling E6 No. 631 leads the train.

Robert Milner

The Rock's CAMELOT

Reflecting on that brief, shining moment when the Rock Island was among the best, and how its *Rockets* made it so

BY PETER A. HANSEN

The Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific was bankrupt. Again. On June 7, 1933, the company sought protection from creditors for the second time in its history. Granted, the CRI&P was hardly alone in this during the Depression years, as more than 20 other Class I railroads were in similar straits. What distinguished the Rock Island was that it had often been a hard-luck player, even when it was technically solvent. Moreover, as would be demonstrated in the late 1930s, “the Rock” was distinguished further by a new, audacious management team that did the unexpected and achieved undreamed-of results.

Like many granger roads, the Rock Island, whose first rails were laid in 1851, grew by mergers, leases, and new construction throughout its initial half-century, reaching its tentacles into seemingly every dale and creekbed of the rural Midwest. That the resulting network made for roundabout routes between major cities, and that the Rock reached some of those cities only by trackage rights, didn’t seem to be much of a problem, as long as the Farm Belt prospered.

During the Great Depression, it didn’t prosper. The entire Midwest was in the grip of an extended drought, and the southern Great Plains in particular suffered the ravages of the Dust Bowl. Agricultural traffic evaporated to a trickle.

It didn’t help that the Rock Island had been mismanaged for 30 years before 1933. Not once, but twice the railroad was bled white to prop up the ambitions of outsiders. A group of investors known as the Reid-Moore Syndicate turned their attentions from Nabisco and Diamond Match in 1901, thinking to use the Rock Island as the cen-

terpiece of a transcontinental railroad empire. While successful railroads were making the transition from shoddy initial construction to modern transportation systems, the Rock’s capital was being used as collateral for more acquisitions. Eventually the obligations outstripped income and RI filed its first bankruptcy petition in 1915.

The Reid-Moore Syndicate was out, but the reorganization scarcely reduced the company’s debt. By the 1920s, history was beginning to repeat. Frisco chairman Edward N. Brown began buying Rock Island stock for his own corporate treasury, and simultaneously, as a member of the Rock’s corporate board, he persuaded his fellow directors to approve dividends of up to 7 percent — good for Frisco, bad for Rock Island. Once again, money that could have improved the property was spent elsewhere, and when the Depression arrived, there was little left to see the Rock Island through hard times. In 1935, with the railroad’s books full of red ink and its tracks deep in Dust Bowl drifts, there was little to suggest that things were about to get better. Amazingly, though, they did.

PLANNED PROGRESS

Court-appointed trustees now were calling the shots, and even though one of them was Rock Island’s aging president, James Gorman, they concluded that new top management was needed. The trustees turned to Edward M. “Ned” Durham, a civil engineer by training but also regarded as a good operating man. A senior vice president with Missouri Pacific, he had previously worked



in the engineering departments of Chicago & North Western and Southern Railway. The Rock’s Durham era began on January 1, 1936.

Durham, in turn, hired 45-year-old John Dow Farrington as his chief operating officer. Farrington, the son of a Great Northern vice president, had made his own reputation as general manager of the Fort Worth & Denver City, the Texas operation of that Prince of Grangers, the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy. He brought in 12 good men, mostly from the Burlington, to fill out CRI&P management ranks and put a stop to the factionalism that had gnawed at the company and sapped its productivity.

If there was ever to be hope for the Rock Island, it had to start at the most fundamental level — with the track. As *Fortune* magazine observed, “Even if the road had been in perfect condition, it would have been a 1916 plant trying to produce a 1936 product.” Not only did the physical plant have to be improved just to bring it up to 1916 standards, it had to catch up on the modernization it had missed in the two decades since.

The new team didn’t have much to work with. When Farrington made his first inspection trips, he found a dispiriting succession of slow-speed track, out-of-service rolling stock, and just plain junk. He ordered a systemwide scrap drive that ultimately raised over \$5 million from old lightweight rail alone. Other scrap, including replacement of worn-out bridges and rolling stock, netted \$5 million more. It was a start.

Additional funding came from the capital markets, but not without a fight. In April 1936, the trustees asked the bankruptcy court for permission to issue \$4.5 million in new debt for deferred maintenance of way and structures. Existing creditors, fearful that their position might be compromised, argued against approval, first before the bankruptcy court and then before the Interstate Commerce Commission. In the end, however, the judge and the ICC allowed the bond issue to proceed.

It was the beginning of a program called “Planned Progress” — and while Farrington would justly be given most of the credit for the Rock’s turnaround in subsequent years, it should be noted that the plan had begun to take shape several weeks before he arrived.



The Peoria Rocket was in its eighth year on October 11, 1945, when at 2 p.m. as train 504, the day’s second trip to Chicago, it called at Bureau, Ill., where the Peoria branch met the main line. By age 10, the twice-daily service had carried 2.3 million passengers.

Ira H. Eigsti



In a photo emblematic of small boys' fascination with trains everywhere, and of the steam-to-diesel transition era, a local freight powered by a 1906-vintage Consolidation waits in the siding at Hagen, Ark., for a TA to flash by with a Memphis-bound *Rocket*.

J. M. Gray

When the Rock Island hit bottom in 1935, the company estimated it would take \$18 million to address the deferred maintenance and position it for anything like normal operations. By 1941, Farrington could tell the court that his team had accomplished all but \$1.5 million of it. In so doing, they had set the stage for the *Rockets*, the road's fleet of modern passenger trains.

"THE HARDEST THING . . ."

Rock Island folklore tells of passengers who were so accustomed to late trains that they became indignant when operations started to be on-time. Chalk it up to the same "Iowa stubborn" attitude celebrated fondly in *The Music Man*. Change can be unsettling, and it must have been downright shocking to see fast, punctual, streamlined trains on the Rock Island.

"The hardest thing we had to do," Farrington recalled in 1944, "was to live down the Rock Island's reputation. After six

months, I recommended the purchase of six streamlined trains. We had to re-establish our identity with the public. I was sure the new trains would do it."

As important as it was to convince the traveling public, the employees also needed the morale-booster. The *Rockets* succeeded on both counts.

The first mention of the new trains in the bankruptcy court files is dated November 17, 1936. The court's permission was sought for the issuance of \$2,550,000 in bonds for the purchase of 350 automobile boxcars, 20 passenger cars, and 6 diesel passenger locomotives. The dry legalese of the petition belies the budding revolution.

What's not dry is the reaction of the creditors to the request. If some of them had had their way, the new trains might never have become a reality.

Although things had begun to look up after Durham and Farrington came on board earlier that year, the Rock Island was still

very much at the mercy of the court, its creditors, and its past. When the road declared bankruptcy, it was \$31 million in debt, and the court-appointed trustees realized there was no way to meet the obligations coming due. They asked for a three-year moratorium on payments, but now that period had almost run its course and still the Rock Island was vague about resumption. In fact, with \$11.6 million in obligations maturing on January 1, 1937, the trustees were asking to take on even more debt.

It's a tribute to the company's attorneys that they were able to make their case successfully. Counsel argued that most of the other railroads in bankruptcy had been allowed to renegotiate their debt down to lower rates, but that the Rock Island had not — and they implied they would withhold payment of any obligations due on January 1 unless the creditors played along.

Judge James Wilkerson asked the railroad's attorneys to be more explicit: Did they



Two miles east of La Salle, Ill., the Rock Island's westward main track went through Split Rock Tunnel while the eastward main skirted it. One of the six unique-to-RI TA diesels zips through the short bore with the morning *Rocket* to Peoria in September 1941.

Dan K. Peterson

intend to default, or not? When they replied that they wanted only to discuss various options, Wilkerson grew notably peeved, asking why the trustees, "an arm of this court," had not come prepared with a firm plan.

Counsel for the creditors jumped in and argued they had shown good faith when they agreed to a moratorium three years earlier, and they didn't think they should be rewarded with default. Moreover, earnings had improved since 1933, and the railroad was actually paying less in debt service as a proportion of earnings than it had before declaring bankruptcy.

After two hours of sometimes acrimonious arguments, the court adjourned with no resolution in sight — and the *Rockets* hang-

ing in the balance. Sometime before court convened the next day, however, the attorneys for both sides struck a compromise, and Judge Wilkerson agreed: the Rock Island would make a payment equal to 10 percent of the \$11.6 million about to come due, and the company would be allowed to borrow more for the new passenger trains. The *Rockets* would be ordered a month later, following the formality of Interstate Commerce Commission approval.

A STUDY IN EVOLUTION

The trains were an interesting evolutionary step in the still-new art of streamliners, borrowing from the trains that had gone before and foreshadowing some changes to

come. Like the Burlington's *Zephyrs*, the *Rockets* were built of "18-8" stainless steel, an alloy with 18 percent chromium and 8 percent nickel, resulting in high tensile strength and extraordinary shine. Also in common with other Budd-built passenger equipment, the *Rockets'* car sides were fluted for more rigidity. Like many early streamliners, the trains were articulated, with each pair of cars sharing a common truck.

Articulation saved weight, made for better tracking, and reduced aerodynamic drag, but it also hampered operational flexibility. The Rock Island was among the last railroads to order such cars, and it, too, found the arrangement was more trouble than it was worth — subsequent cars would each be



The *Texas Rocket*, first of the *Rocket* fleet, was just over half a year old when it pulled out of Houston (top) on March 13, 1938. Note its unique lettering: **TEXAS ROCKET** on the TA's nose emblem, and (above, also at Houston) **BURLINGTON-ROCK ISLAND** on the cars.

Two photos: Harry Heaney, Joe R. Thompson collection

separate vehicles with two trucks. The cars were also built with underbody skirting, and many kept this feature until the end of their service lives more than 20 years later.

The initial order of 20 cars made for six trainsets: two with 4 cars each, and four with 3 cars each. These were day trains — each had a baggage-dinette-coach, a 76-seat coach, and a round-end observation-lounge; the 4-car trains had an additional 60-seat coach. On 3-car trains, the lounge car seated 52, half in a conventional coach configuration at the forward end of the car and half in the lounge at the rear; a bar was between the sections. Observation cars for the 4-car trains seated 36 in two lounge areas separated by a bar, and they also contained a 5-seat drawing room.

The interiors were just as striking as the

flashy exteriors. Each type of car was decorated in a different scheme: the dinettes in shades of green; coaches in gray, purple, and blue; observation cars in blue, brown, and gold. It's hard to overstate the effect of such cars on Depression-era Americans who had despaired of ever again having anything new.

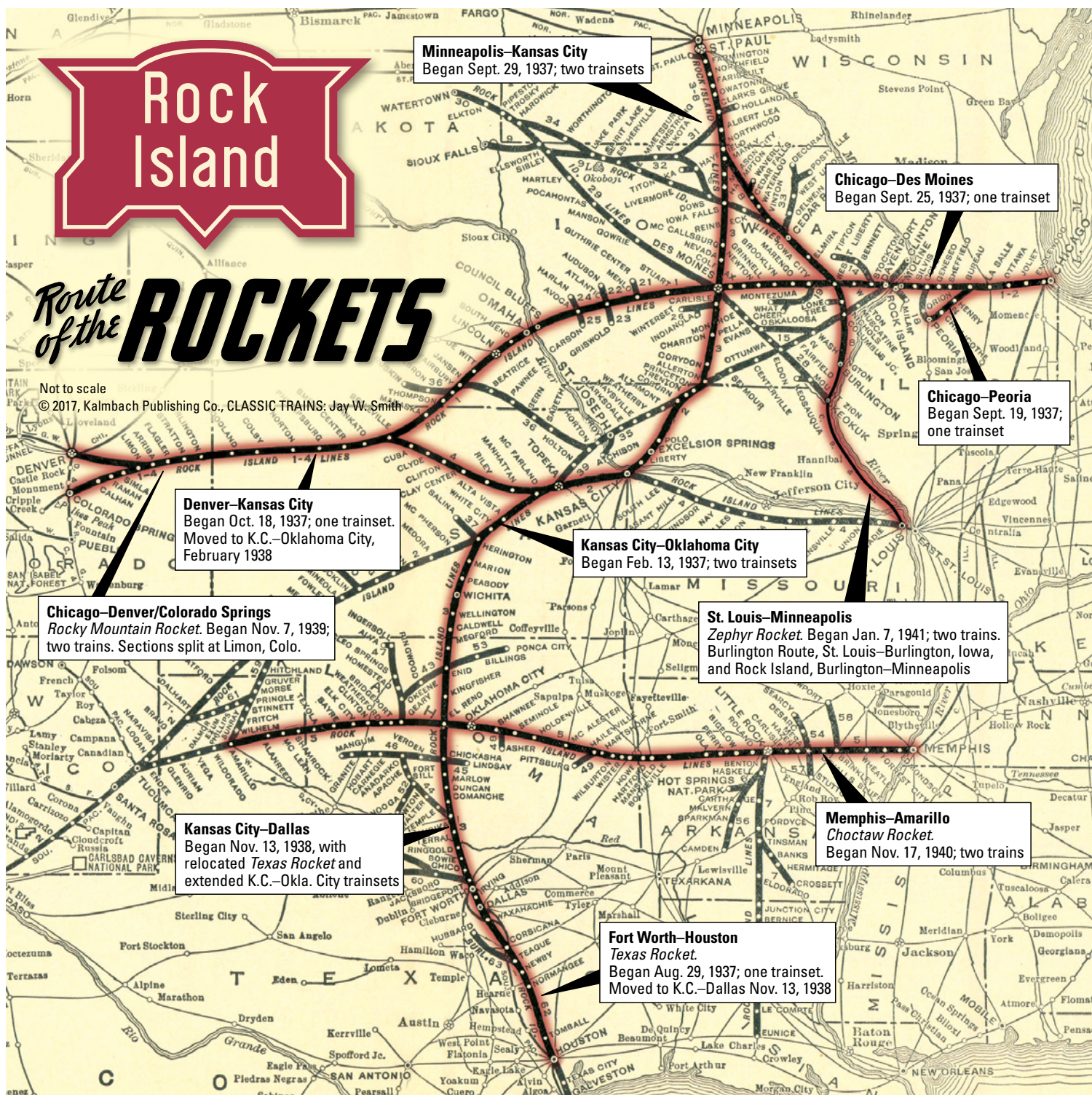
Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the first *Rockets* was their motive power. Whereas the earliest Burlington and Union Pacific streamliners had only a powered leading truck, with the trailing truck articulated with the first car, the Rock Island went for a separate locomotive. Forsaking the turret cabs and *Zephyr*-style shovel-noses of earlier trains, the *Rockets* were among the first to be powered by what came to be known as cab-unit locomotives. With elegant, deeply raked prow, the locomotives looked like baby brothers to the slightly earlier E1s that powered the Santa Fe's 1937 *Super Chief*.

Built by Electro-Motive Corp., the *Rocket* locomotives were designated as model TA (twelve-hundred horsepower, A unit), and Rock Island had the only six ever built. They

had a B-B wheel arrangement (vs. A1A-A1A for the 1,800 h.p. E1s), and their single 16-cylinder Winton 201A diesel engine sufficed for the short trains they were built to pull (the E1s each had two 12-cylinder 201As). The TAs were a forerunner of Electro-Motive's F-unit series, launched with the FT of 1939. Although the TAs would prove unequal to more demanding assignments in later years, they were more than adequate to the task of pulling the initial *Rockets*, and their 52:25 gearing was good for 110 mph.

EMC's famous design shop also gave the TAs the paint scheme that would be the base for RI's image for over two decades: a striking application of the "bow wave" theme, rendered in scarlet and crimson. The rear half of the carbody was stainless steel, providing a smooth transition to the cars behind. Gleaming under a coat of wax for their early publicity tours, the TAs were indeed eye-catching.

More important, the *Rocket* streamliners would turn a profit and help restore their owner's tarnished image.



LAUNCHING THE ROCKETS

The *Texas Rocket* was the first to debut, on August 29, 1937. Ironically, it was somewhat anticlimactic, being the second diesel streamliner on the Fort Worth–Houston route. The Burlington's *Sam Houston Zephyr* had entered service on October 1, 1936, using a trainset bumped from the Chicago–Minneapolis *Twin Zephyrs* when that route demanded a longer train.

Moreover, the *Sam Houston Zephyr* and

Texas Rocket ran on the same track, in reality being two halves of the same service on the jointly owned Burlington–Rock Island Railroad, a marriage of convenience for the grangers between Fort Worth/Dallas and Houston (and a route with no large intermediate towns). The Rock's train, with TA No. 602 and three cars, was unique among the *Rockets* for its BURLINGTON–ROCK ISLAND lettering, and because 602's nose logo had the train name instead of the road name.

More typical of the trains to follow, the second RI streamliner became the *Peoria Rocket*, linking Chicago with what then was Illinois' second-largest city, 161 miles down the Illinois River. Service began on September 19, 1937, with TA No. 603 and its four-car train in full Rock Island regalia. More substantively, the service shortened the running time on the route by a full 55 minutes. A 2-hour 35-minute schedule, including four stops, made for some fast running (frequent-

ly topping the 90 mph mark), and it also allowed the trainset to cover two daily round trips. The route was important to the Rock Island, and a rarity for it, because it had no significant rail competition.

The network continued to expand, with a Chicago–Des Moines *Rocket* and a Minneapolis–Kansas City *Rocket*, both of which debuted the following week. The latter train slashed 5 hours 50 minutes on its 493-mile route, an impressive performance that turned a plodding 14-hour overnight run into a daytime market for the Rock Island. Two of the three-car sets were assigned to this run, providing a daily trip in each direction. The Des Moines train had a four-car set, and together with the *Peoria Rocket* provided a third round trip on the eastern portion of its route, RI's busiest corridor.

The sixth and last of the original *Rocket* trains entered service between Kansas City and Denver on October 18, 1937, and once again, its speed turned an overnight market for Rock Island into a day trip. The three-car trainset lasted in this service for only four months, however, before being shifted to the Kansas City–Oklahoma City run effective February 13, 1938.

One factor was the relative lack of population on the 635-mile distance between K.C. and Denver. The seeds for the abrupt change, though, had been sown before the Denver train entered service. As first conceived when the *Rockets* were ordered, the K.C.–Denver route was to have been protected by two trainsets, providing daily service in each direction. When one of those sets was assigned to the *Texas Rocket*, the Denver service became a triweekly operation, and the Rock Island learned how tough it is to build a market without daily service.

Notwithstanding the Kansas City–Denver misstep, the *Rockets* made a splash with employees, railroad officials, and the traveling public. Just as Farrington had predicted, the trains were helping the railroad live down its bad reputation, and in those terms alone, the *Rockets* earned their keep. They also happened to be profitable, returning all of their initial \$2.2 million investment within three years. There was clearly a market for such trains in 1930s America: Farrington's intuitive hunch was confirmed, without benefit of any marketing studies.

There could be little doubt that the Rock Island was coming back from the dead. Incredibly, it hadn't even been two years since Durham and Farrington came on board.

SECOND GENERATION

Success for the initial *Rockets* bred an appetite for more. The Rock Island's trustees again petitioned the bankruptcy court for permission to acquire more new cars and locomotives, and this time, creditors didn't protest. Not only had the first trains paid for themselves, but everyone now understood



After launching its sixth *Rocket*, between Denver (top) and Kansas City, RI diverted the second train intended for the run to Texas, and the resulting triweekly schedule soon died. The train migrated to a K.C.–Oklahoma City run, and later in 1938 was joined by the former Houston train to provide daily K.C.–Dallas service. Oklahoma City, now off the *Rocket* route, was served by a motor-car shuttle to El Reno, where it is shown (middle) with the northbound *Rocket* and a Memphis–Tucumcari steam train. In 1948 (above), motor 9090 left Oklahoma City for El Reno, towing a through coach for Dallas.

From top: William Moedinger, C. A. Emry, Preston George



There's lots of activity at the joint RI-Katy station in McAlester, Okla., on a fine day in 1949 as the westbound *Choctaw Rocket* loads and a Katy train stands at the right.

Robert A. Hadley



The overnight *Zephyr Rocket* from St. Louis arrives at St. Paul Union Depot. The train ran on the CB&Q as far as Burlington, Iowa, where it switched to the Rock Island.

Ben F. Cutler, Robert A. Le Massena collection

their symbolic importance as the most visible sign of a Rock Island revitalization that also included better track, modern signaling, and rebuilt bridges.

Much remained to be done on the physical plant, and in coming years, curves would be straightened, grades would be leveled, and new river bridges and freight yards would be built. None of this might have happened without the confidence that the *Rockets* engendered in the financial community.

After the first *Rockets* were in operation, new services were instituted between Kansas City and Dallas, Chicago and Denver/Colorado Springs, Memphis and Amarillo, and St. Louis and Minneapolis. All were remarkable for their own unique quirks.

The stage was set for K.C.-Dallas service when the Burlington-Rock Island assigned a second *Zephyr* trainset to the Fort Worth-Houston market in November 1938. Headed



by shovel-nose unit 9902, the train had been built for *Twin Zephyr* service and then operated as the Kansas City–St. Louis *Ozark State Zephyr* before going to Texas. Upon No. 9902's diversion to Texas, the former *Texas Rocket* train was assigned to the K.C.–Dallas run, opposite the set that had been running from Kansas City to Oklahoma City since February.

In a bizarre twist, CB&Q 9902 kept the *Texas Rocket* name on its rectangular nose emblem, not the familiar BURLINGTON ROUTE lettering.

The *Rocky Mountain Rocket* was the first train to deviate from the abbreviated consist of the originals. Drawn in its earliest days by a single 2,000 h.p. E3A (No. 625 or 626), the non-articulated, seven-car consists included the first sleeping cars in *Rocket* service. Each consist made a daily one-way trip on the 1,073-mile route.

Each consist had an 8-section 2-double-bedroom 2-compartment car for service between Chicago and Colorado Springs, and a 10-section 4-roomette car for the Denver



The *Rocket Mountain Rocket*, first in the fleet to exceed four cars, accelerates out of Bureau, Ill. At Limon, Colo., it will split into sections to Colorado Springs and Denver.

Ira H. Eigsti

section. In addition, the round-end observation-lounge car had 5 double bedrooms. The sleepers and obs cars were built by Pullman-Standard, the others by Budd.

The Colorado train was also noteworthy for a 1940 motive-power experiment unique to the Rock Island — the AB6. Essentially an E6B unit with a cab, baggage compartment, steam generator, and only one engine, it was intended to handle the Colorado Springs section. In that infancy of dieseldom, it seemed like a good concept: two units to handle the combined sections from Chicago to Limon, Colo., where they'd split. Although the train would run regularly with the AB6 (later, as middle unit of three powering a longer train), in practice, the switching maneuvers necessary at Limon to get the Colorado Springs cars behind the AB6 weren't really any simpler than the alternatives. The only thing the experiment saved was a little wind resistance and the smooth appearance of a B unit behind the leading A unit on the portion of the trip east of Limon.

Nevertheless, the *Rocky Mountain Rocket* was a success, turning a \$90,000 annual deficit on earlier trains into a \$289,000 profit. Rock Island had heavy competition in the Chicago–Denver market, from the Burlington and Union Pacific. Each offered 16-hour streamliners years before the *Rocky Mountain Rocket* was introduced in November 1939, but the Rock was competitive again in terms of equipment if not schedule.

In addition, the *Rocket* was the only way to get from Chicago to Colorado Springs without changing trains, important to the well-heeled clientele who patronized the Broadmoor and other Springs-area resorts. As John D. Farrington later observed, "Prior to the establishment of this service, we had

practically lost all our business to Colorado . . . we have recaptured our standing as a Colorado line."

The next *Rocket* to enter service was the *Choctaw Rocket*, in November 1940 between Memphis and Amarillo. It sported a Pullman-built consist of a coach, an 8-section 5-bedroom sleeper, and a dining-observation car. A lone E6 usually held down the daily run in each direction on the 762-mile route.

The *Choctaw's* coaches were interesting. The Jim Crow era is usually associated with heavyweight cars, but the *Choctaw* had "separate but equal" facilities in a streamlined package: two vestibules, two sets of restrooms, and two seating areas with a partition in between. If something can be both beautiful and ugly at the same time, these cars qualified.

The prewar era ended for the *Rockets* the same way it began, in another collaboration with the Burlington Route. In January 1941, the *Zephyr Rocket* entered service between St. Louis and Minneapolis on a 14-hour overnight schedule. Northward, the Burlington handled the train as far as its namesake Iowa city, and the Rock Island took it from there, via Cedar Rapids and Waterloo to Minneapolis.

Unlike the earlier Texas collaboration, however, the two railroads didn't supply complete trainsets for the service. Rather, each contributed to a pool of cars, and the resulting consists were thus a mongrelized combination. Heavyweight sleeping cars were included, too, although they had been modernized with air-conditioning, rolled roofs, and underbody skirting. Still, the overall appearance of the train didn't approach the elegance of either a *Zephyr* or a *Rocket*. It would be a harbinger of change.



Diesel 624, the prototype for Alco-GE's line of "DL109" 2,000 h.p. passenger units, nears La Salle Street Station, Chicago, with the daily *Rocket* from Des Moines in fall 1946.

Tom Harley

STATUS QUO NO MORE

The planes of Pearl Harbor torpedoed the Rock Island's little streamliners just as surely as they sank the ships in Hawaii. Wartime traffic swelled far beyond the trains' modest capacity, which left the Rock, like most other railroads, scrambling for solutions. The *Rocket* consists were sometimes broken up, often reassigned, and frequently augmented with different equipment. The TAs became troublesome, too — their 1,200 horses weren't enough for bigger trains, their multiple-unit capability with other locomotives proved problematic, and their front draft gear was insufficient to pull a trailing load while running in reverse. The original *Rocket* equipment served in many assignments throughout the system for more than 20 years, but the concept of designing locomotives for specific consists had been lost. Such trains simply proved too inflexible.

Before the war, though, the *Rockets* did exactly what they were designed to do, both on the road and in their employer's profit-and-loss statements. On the eve of America's entry into World War II, Ned Durham and John Farrington were called to testify before yet another reorganization hearing. (It wasn't the first and it wouldn't be the last — legal wrangling kept the company in bankruptcy until 1948.) "Our results have been most satisfactory," Farrington said, and Durham agreed, citing a return of nearly 40 percent on the first six trainsets since 1937.

In nearly two hours of testimony, Farrington rattled off an impressive litany of statistics for the reborn Rock Island: everything from the productivity of track gangs to the savings for roller-bearing-equipped steam locomotives to the cost of future improvements. He even knew the crop yields for various regions of the Rock's empire — year by year. It was a *tour de force*, not only of his knowledge, but of his understanding and vision.

It was not to last. Farrington became president upon Ned Durham's retirement in 1942 and retired himself in 1956. Farring-

ton's tenure at the helm coincided with the Rock's best years. That's not to suggest his successors were less competent — the estimable Downing Jenks followed him as president — but it is to say that even Farrington's improvements weren't enough, in the end, to save the Rock Island.

The company was a prisoner of several factors. The vagaries of farming were omnipresent, of course, but other granger roads survived because they had more diverse traffic and generated more of it on-line. The Rock Island reached the hearts of too many big cities via trackage rights, thus limiting access to urban shippers. As a result, RI's non-agricultural tonnage was largely bridge traffic, which put it at the mercy of friendly connections. The company was ever the victim of its history, as when it built southwest to Leavenworth, Kans., instead of Kansas City, or bypassed Oklahoma City on its north-south route in favor of El Reno, Okla. Even Farrington and Jenks couldn't play such a hand forever.

In its death throes, the company was the subject of an agonizing 10-year struggle to merge with the Union Pacific. By the time the ICC approved, as one wag put it, "the bride had lost her looks," and UP withdrew its petition. Meanwhile, the Rock had slid into bankruptcy for a third and final time, and it finally ceased operations in 1980. It was the biggest abandonment in U.S. railroad history up to that time.

The *Rockets* weren't the first of the prewar streamliners, and others drew a more celebrated clientele. But no other carrier of the era started with so little and achieved so much. The Rock Island came from hard luck, and to hard luck it returned. But in between, its *Rockets* reached for the stars. ■

PETER A. HANSEN has had numerous bylines in CLASSIC TRAINS and other publications. He is editor of the Railway & Locomotive Historical Society's journal Railroad History. He lives in Florida with his wife Bonnie.



Chicago's La Salle Street Station was the launchpad for legions of Rock Island suburban, intercity, and long-haul trains, including several *Rockets*. Here, an E8 waits to leave with either the *Rocky Mountain Rocket* or the *Golden State* in fall 1952. At left, a Santa Fe RS1 has come over from Dearborn Station on a transfer run.

Frank and Todd Novak collection



DETROIT ARROW

GreatTrains IN PHOTOS



Launched on April 28, 1935, the *Detroit Arrow* used the Pennsylvania Railroad between Chicago and Fort Wayne, Ind., and the Wabash to the east. For a time it ranked among the world's fastest trains. In April '41, the westbound side became the *Chicago Arrow* and the route got a second train, the *Red Bird*. Both lasted until 1949, when PRR-WAB conceded the market to the New York Central. Here, the *Detroit Arrow* departs Englewood station on the South Side of Chicago in May 1946.

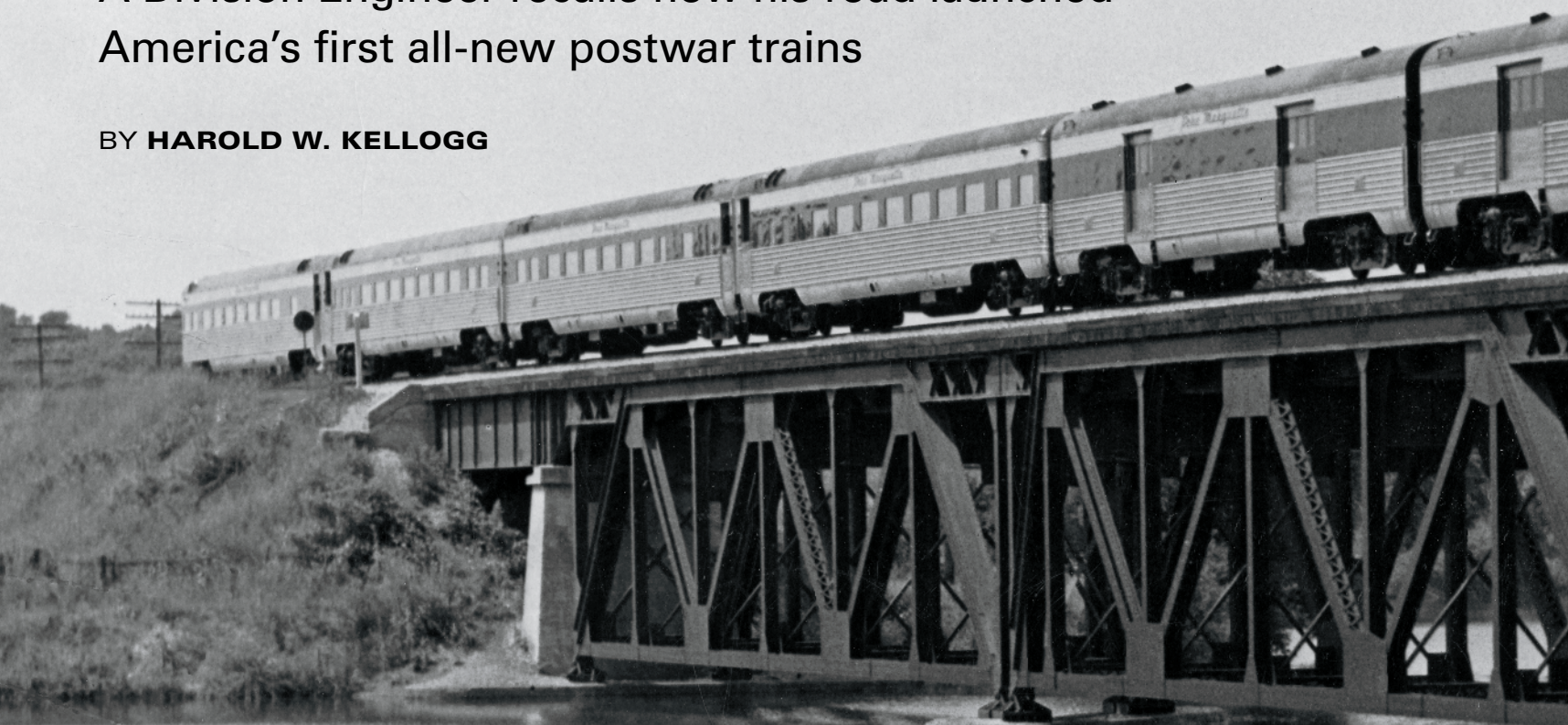
R. S. Stemler



Michigan's own ***STREAMLINERS***

A Division Engineer recalls how his road launched
America's first all-new postwar trains

BY HAROLD W. KELLOGG



E7 No. 103 and a sister, leaving Chicago on June 21, 1947, display the colors introduced by the new trains and later adopted by C&O.

Dave Wallace, Frank and Todd Novak collection

A 1946 publicity photo shows an original *Pere Marquette* train crossing the Thornapple River east of Grand Rapids. This may not be a revenue run, as the dining car is missing from the consist.

Pere Marquette



On Saturday, August 10, 1946, the Pere Marquette Railway placed in service between Detroit and Grand Rapids, Mich., the first two streamlined, diesel-powered trains delivered to any U.S. railroad after World War II, named *Pere Marquettes* for their sponsor. The scheduled running time for the 152-mile trip was 2 hours 40 minutes (compared with 3 hours 20 minutes for conventionally equipped steam trains), including two stops

(Plymouth and Lansing) and slow speeds within the city limits of Detroit and Grand Rapids. In view of this schedule, PM management realized that it would have to have good track to ensure safe and on-time performance.

At the beginning of 1946, I was Division Engineer in Saginaw, Mich., for Pere Marquette. About the middle of January, the Chief Engineer came to Saginaw and told me that on February 1, I would be appointed

Division Engineer of the Detroit Division. The new streamliners would be in service about the middle of the summer, he said, and the railroad wanted the route in first-class condition to handle them. In those days for PM, money was no object.

I found the division in fair shape to handle trains at 60 mph. The line was single track with the exception of 25 miles of double track, from Detroit to Plymouth. It was protected by semaphore-type automatic block signals (ABS) and automatic train control (ATC). Trains were operated by timetable and train orders except between Grand Rapids and Lake Odessa, 32 miles, which was CTC territory. The rail was about half 110-pound and half 112. About 30 miles had stone ballast, the rest gravel, which in most places was muddy. The ties in areas where trackmen had been unavailable during the war were not good. During the war the Detroit Division had carried heavy traffic, and the track condition had not yet been brought back up to standard.

One of the reasons for including these details here is that I find today it is difficult to realize what could be done in 1946 without any trouble. The maintenance sections on the Detroit Division varied in length from 5 to 20 miles. For the upgrading, these were rearranged into 12-mile sections, with 8 men per section and a 35-man extra force organized and placed in camp cars. So as to not lay off any section foremen, the title of track patrol foreman was inaugurated; each patrolled a territory about 30 miles long twice a day, so he was home each night. We requested 30 miles of new 112-pound rail and received that, some from other divisions.

ATTACKING THE TRACK

As soon as the frost was out of the ground, a 200-man gang of contract labor was organized. This gang had worked on the Pere Marquette for many years. They lived in camp cars and worked 10 hours per day, 7 days per week at straight time. Their first task was to lay the rail. The only mechanized tools the gang had were adzing machines and a Burro crane — the remainder of the work was done with hand tools. After the rail was laid, this gang spent the rest of the summer rebuilding the track structure.

The old gravel ballast was stripped from between the ties, new ties were installed (about 1,000 per mile), and the track raised an average of 10 inches on crushed stone; this was done in three separate lifts. The only mechanical equipment was eight off-track air compressors to power the tamping tools.

When the figures were totaled after completion of this work, the gang was found to have averaged upgrading one-half mile per day. Compare this with the same operation I did in the 1960s with a completely mechanized force of 40 men working 8 hours per day over a given segment of track — we



The *Pere Marquette* dining cars had two 22-place seating areas with the kitchen in the middle of the car. In the top photo, looking toward the kitchen, waitresses (not waiters, as on most diners) serve a meal; note the stylized "PM" in the circular grille above the passageway. The seating areas could double as lounge space, as in the photo above.

Two photos, Pere Marquette



Among the features of the *Pere Marquette* coaches were window shades and curtains, Sleepy-Hollow seats, and a conductor's desk (left). The cars also included electric drinking fountains and glass panels inscribed with yet another type of "PM" logo (right).

Two photo, *Pere Marquette*

averaged three-quarters of a mile per day.

To improve the general appearance of the property, one paint gang was assigned to paint all the depots white, as well as all road-way signs. Eight off-track mowing machines were assigned to the section forces, who mowed the entire right of way from fence to fence. Most of the right of way had previously been smoothed, so mowing was an easy task. Signalmen painted masts and semaphore blades.

The route had about 100 curves. The sharpest, two 4-degree curves, were eliminated later. There were some 3-degree curves, many of 2 degrees, and a few of 1 degree. The spirals were lengthened on all curves, and they were lined and the elevation of the outer rail was increased. Maximum superelevation was 5 inches. To ensure a smooth ride, we kept the top speed to 70 mph on 2-degree curves and 60 mph on 3-degree curves. The authorized timetable speed was 80, with certain portions permitting higher speeds owing to the ATC.

The two new *Pere Marquettes* were delivered in the first week of August 1946. Each train had an Electro-Motive 2,000 h.p. E7A as power, Nos. 101 and 102, the first road

diesels on any Chesapeake & Ohio-affiliated line (C&O, via Cleveland's Van Sweringen brothers, had controlled PM for decades).

The two trains, built by Pullman-Standard, consisted of seven cars each: a 72-foot Railway Post Office-baggage car, Nos. 50–51; a 70-foot baggage car, Nos. 60–61; an 85-foot, blunt-end observation-lounge coach (56 seats plus 10 lounge chairs), Nos. 20–23; an 85-foot coach (54 seats and a 9-seat smoking section), Nos. 30–33; a 44-seat diner with triangular tables and a center kitchen, Nos. 10–11; a duplicate 85-foot coach; and a duplicate 85-foot observation-lounge coach on the other end. The reason for two observation cars was to eliminate turning the train at terminals. The head-end cars were simply switched to the other end for the return trip. Incidentally, the four head-end cars were the only streamlined, lightweight mail and/or baggage equipment that PM or its parent C&O ever owned.

On August 5, 1946, we made a Grand Rapids–Detroit test run, and after being on public display for several days, the *Pere Marquettes* entered regular service on the 10th.

After each trip, the engines and cars were cleaned inside and out, and any maintenance

needs reported during the runs were taken care of each night.

The two E7s remained the only road diesels on PM for over a year; it already had diesel switchers. Each E7 averaged 1½ Detroit–Grand Rapids round trips, or 456 miles, a day. A 1,200-gallon-capacity oil tank allowed 600 miles between refuelings. The only serious problem occurred in March 1947, when, after a heavy snowstorm, the traction motors on the unit on train No. 5 became wet. After limping into Grand Rapids, the diesel was unable to return to Detroit on No. 6, so Pacific-type locomotive 722, built by Alco in 1920 and fitted with 77-inch drivers, was called out. The 4-6-2 made the time. I rode the engine part way over the division to see how it handled the train, and it had no trouble.

LOOK SHARP, ACT SHARP

The operating crews consisted of engineer, fireman, conductor, baggageman, brakeman, and flagman. All trainmen were told to get new uniforms and to keep them cleaned and pressed. They were also told they must be polite to the passengers, and all carried out these instructions to the letter. In addition,



At Grand Rapids Union Station, a PM 0-8-0 and Pennsy K4 flank E7 No. 105, ready to depart with a *Pere Marquette* on July 22, 1947. Elliott Kahn



Former PM E7 No. 105, in full C&O livery but with "*Pere Marquette*" on its flanks, leads Detroit–Grand Rapids train 15 over NYC tracks in Dearborn, Mich., in July 1960. J. David Ingles



Each *Pere Marquette* carried two coach-observation-lounge cars, one at each end of the train, to minimize switching at terminals. This view is from December 1946. L. O. Merrill

there were two coach porters on each train. The dining car had a chef and two assistants, plus a steward, a bartender, and four young waitresses. Fresh-cut flowers were placed on the tables. The meals were good and reasonably priced. After each meal, candy and cigarettes were offered to each dining-car patron. Tipping was not allowed, and morning and evening newspapers were provided. Until departure time in Detroit, a free telephone was available in the observation lounge. In the beginning, reservations were required for all seats, and a passenger representative rode each train to sell tickets to those who had not purchased one before boarding. However, after little more than a year, this reservation system was dropped, as was the no-tipping policy.

In 1948, Grand Rapids–Chicago trains were upgraded and also given the *Pere Mar-*

quette name, as was one short-lived (1949–50) Detroit–Saginaw train. In 1950, the original equipment was supplemented with cars from the huge postwar equipment order placed by Chesapeake & Ohio for the *Chessie*, which never entered service on its Washington–Cincinnati route. (C&O had absorbed the PM on June 6, 1947.) Parlor cars — Nos. 1800–1803, named for lakes — also were added to the trains. Six more E7s, Nos. 103–108, were delivered in 1947 and early 1948 in the original PM livery, and then four more, Nos. 95–98, built in July 1948, came in the same color scheme but lettered for C&O. Some of the 100s, and original cars, carried "*Pere Marquette*" on their flanks into the 1960s, although a C&O emblem had been applied to the nose of the E7s and near the door on some of the coaches. The original coaches from the first two trains were later sold to the Chicago & Eastern Illinois.

For six or seven years into the 1950s, passenger business between Grand Rapids and Detroit was very good. But with the advent of super highways and air travel, the passengers, as they did elsewhere, gradually left the railroad. The railroad did not leave the passengers. Despite their service amenities dwindling throughout the 1960s, remnant trains, still known as the *Pere Marquettes*, lasted on both the Chicago and Detroit runs until Amtrak's inception, as did a one-car Holland–Muskegon, Mich., connecting train. ■

HAROLD W. KELLOGG, a native of Georgia, earned an engineering degree from the University of Michigan and began his railroad career as a rodman for the PM in 1928. He became Assistant Chief Engineer for C&O in 1956, and retired as Regional Chief Engineer for Chessie System in 1970. He died in 1984.

The coaling tower at Plymouth, Mich., is of no use to E7 No. 102, rushing past with Detroit-Grand Rapids *Pere Marquette* train 3 in 1953. The diesel is still in full PM dress six years after the C&O takeover.

Robert A. Hadley



The dark horse 400

Chicago & North Western's most heavily traveled train isn't the famous *Twin Cities 400* but a sister streamliner that connects Chicago with northeastern Wisconsin and Upper Michigan

BY FRANK P. DONOVAN JR.



North Western's *Peninsula 400* approaches Milwaukee on its run down from Michigan's Upper Peninsula in January 1952. Powering the yellow-and-green streamliner are diesels built by Electro-Motive and Fairbanks-Morse.

A. C. Kalmbach



The original Chicago–Minneapolis 400 debuted in 1935 with a steam-hauled heavy-weight consist, then got E3 diesels in June 1939 (top, at Chicago), followed 3 months later with new streamlined cars (above, westbound at Evanston, Ill., in June 1962).

Top, John Proebsting; above, Bob Krone

Let's go for a ride on the most heavily traveled streamliner on the Chicago & North Western system, a ride striking across the accustomed east-west routes of travel and ending at a town of less than 10,000 population. I'm sure most people think of the *Twin Cities 400* or the Union Pacific transcontinental "City" streamliners operating over C&NW between Chicago and Omaha as having the heaviest patronage of C&NW's long-distance trains. But there's a dark horse in the picture, not so well known, yet topping them all in ridership. It's the *Peninsula 400* serving north-eastern Wisconsin and Upper Michigan, a

streamliner to a Midwest vacationland serving many communities en route.

Things are quiet around 3 p.m. on a Friday in North Western's big Chicago Passenger Terminal concourse. At 3:45, however, about 300 people funnel in front of Gate 5 for the 14-car *Peninsula*, and by 4 we've lost count. Fact is, it's all we can do to keep our composure in the crowd pouring through the gate in a mad rush to get a seat. The mob is not unruly, only anxious.

Trainmen valiantly try to segregate passengers into fore and aft categories. Folks headed for points north of Green Bay are admonished to board ahead of the dining

car, whereas riders to Milwaukee and Fox River Valley communities are directed to cars behind the diner. Bound for the last stop, we elect to try the first coach and toss our baggage on our seats. The train isn't due to leave until 4:10, so let's get a quick look at the consist.

Up front is a throbbing two-unit Electro-Motive E-unit diesel with its yellow and green color combination so characteristic of the C&NW. Next is a baggage-RPO car in Pullman green, the only discordant color scheme in the consist. Then comes a long yellow streak rimmed by green: four coaches, a C&NW parlor car, a diner, and seven more coaches.

The *Peninsula 400*, by the way, is only one trainset, although it runs both north and south daily. It makes the 773-mile round trip from Ishpeming, Mich., to Chicago and back, running from dawn to midnight, south as train 214 and north as 209. Oddly, its southbound route differs from its northbound one. Going north, between Milwaukee and Green Bay it serves the inland Fox River Valley route, but southbound between those cities, it travels C&NW's Lakeshore Division. Odder still, on Sundays the southbound trip is via the Valley. The schedule allows only 1 hour 35 minutes for unloading, servicing, and loading at Chicago, so it is vital that the train adhere closely to the time-card, which it does.



The southbound *Peninsula 400* exits the Escanaba River bridge at Wells, Mich., on September 1, 1950. It's the Friday before Labor Day, and the train will have a big load when it returns north in the evening.

T. H. Desnoyers, Krambles-Peterson Archive

We are hardly back on the train when it silently pulls out. By this time, every seat seems to be taken, and standees line the aisles. A few more passengers get on at Evanston, mostly Northwestern University students bound for a weekend at home. Then once more we are speeding north, through the fashionable North Shore suburbs where much of Chicago's elite resides. At Winnetka, for example, four railroad presidents live within a few blocks of each other, and sometimes all four take the same C&NW commuter train to work!

We find it hard to get used to the left-hand operation on C&NW's double-track lines. To the right paralleling us are the tracks of the Chicago North Shore & Milwaukee electric interurban, and up the line a bit we'll come near the blue waters of Lake Michigan. Stops are made at Kenosha and Racine in Wisconsin, and we get rid of our standees as well as some seated commuters. The *Peninsula 400* is a favorite with Kenoshans, who regard it as the finest "commuter train" in the land. And well they might, for this train covers the 52 miles from Chicago to Kenosha in just 45 minutes. No other afternoon C&NW train gives such fast service.

Things are beginning to quiet down now that our short-haul riders are gone, and we remark to a fellow traveler that there will probably be many more empty seats when we pull out of Milwaukee.

"Friend, you haven't seen anything yet," our companion retorts. "Wait till we hit Milwaukee. There we pack 'em in . . . you'll see."

He speaks the truth. A few passengers get off at the lakefront station where all Northwestern trains stop in the Cream City, but many more swarm the platform with fading hopes of getting a seat. Nor is this all, for the conductor tells us that a six-car advance section of the *Peninsula*, run as Second 151 to Green Bay, carried some 500 weekenders.

LAKES, STREAMS, HILLS

As we leave Milwaukee, we push a button underneath the armrest and the back of the seat tips to a comfortable half-reclining position. We are going to pass through a restful part of Wisconsin, a land of lakes and streams and rolling countryside, so let's be restful too.

The train speeds along the single-track route through Wisconsin hills. Soon we halt at West Bend, a rural community with church spires and a few manufacturing plants. Almost every housewife in the state knows of this town because of the familiar kitchen utensils made by West Bend Aluminum Co. Next stop is Fond du Lac at the south end of Lake Winnebago, the largest body of water in Wisconsin. We'll see its bluish-red waters off to the east from time to time for the next 30 miles or so. Fond du Lac is a railroad center, with Soo Line shops and

five C&NW lines radiating out, plus a Milwaukee Road branch.

From here to Green Bay we make five stops, one about every 10 miles. They are all important, for this valley is studded with end-to-end communities like a powerful chain, each link of which goes to make for a strong industrial economy. Even before the coming of the railroad, the Fox River valley was a thriving series of towns taking advantage of the availability of water power and water transport. Papermaking is the largest industry.

As we enter Fond du Lac, C&NW's line from Janesville, Wis., comes in from the left. Part of C&NW's original route to these parts from Chicago, up here it's now only a secondary line with a daily-except-Sunday motor car. This was the earliest railroad north of Milwaukee, its first 20 miles of track laid in 1853 southwest from Fond du Lac.

Next is Oshkosh, the butt of jokes and a favorite locale for vaudeville actors trying to impersonate a country yokel far from home. As with Oskaloosa, Paducah, or Kalamazoo, the arrangement of letters and inflection of voice implies a hick town. But the implication does not stick once you've seen progres-

Late winter is typically not a heavy travel time, but the southbound *Peninsula 400* sports a robust 13 cars as it crosses the Fox River in Green Bay in March 1947. The streamliner is headed for North Western's line down the shore of Lake Michigan.

Brad Kniskern, Bob Baker collection



sive Oshkosh. It has wide streets, a fine library, well-equipped schools, and a sizable teachers' college. It is home of the Four Wheel Drive truck, the oversize jeep from World War I and a popular all-service vehicle in World War II. And do not forget Oshkosh-B'Gosh overalls, and wood products by the score. The central business district is sandwiched between the North Western's Valley line on the east and the Soo's main line on the west.

At all these Fox River valley towns, *Peninsula 400* passengers scurry on and off the

train. After Oshkosh, another load gets off at the twin cities of Neenah and Menasha, the paper mill capital of Wisconsin. These two communities have nine major mills and several smaller ones. Biggest by far is Badger-Globe, part of the huge Kimberly-Clark Corp. The Marathon mill is one of the largest makers of cartons, waxed paper, and the familiar bread wrappers. Publishing firm George Banta employs nearly 600 people, and the mill of Gilbert Paper also has a large payroll. Gilbert makes money literally as well as figuratively, for it manufactures the paper

used in Uncle Sam's greenbacks. These two contiguous towns share a station whose sign reads NEENAH-MENASHA.

It's beginning to get dark outside, but within our car all is light and cheery, and soon we're slowing down for Appleton Junction, where passengers can connect with train 109, which will head west for 170 miles through Eland, Wausau, and Marshfield to Merrillan, Wis. At Fond du Lac, our train met another local, No. 9, also going west to Marshfield on a 122-mile route by way of Ripon and Wisconsin Rapids. No. 9 arrives



at Marshfield 85 minutes earlier than No. 109. These local connections are another reason for the *Peninsula 400's* popularity with up-state Wisconsinites.

COEDS OFF AT APPLETON

In downtown Appleton, our next stop, a bevy of coeds gets off the train and piles into a radio-equipped taxicab for Lawrence College, out of sight to the east. As in so many Fox Valley communities, you can see where the town has paved over streetcar tracks. This has particular significance in Appleton,

noted for C. J. Van Depoele's pioneer trolley line, which opened for traffic in 1886 with five 10 h.p. cars sputtering over 5 miles of track. Years later the line became a link in an interurban system extending from Fond du Lac to Green Bay, the remains of which are visible from time to time on the east side of the C&NW tracks.

Dusk has turned to darkness, but as we near Green Bay the lights of mills and heavy industry attract our attention. At the C&NW's large riverside depot, we change crews and cut off two cars. Many passengers

leave the train and others get on, including some who came up ahead of us on the *Peninsula's* first section. Presently we're speeding northward, an elongated blaze of light throwing its rays along both sides of the single-track right of way. No use trying to look out anymore — we'll catch this part of the country on our return trip in daylight. Towns flit by: first Oconto, then Peshtigo, and finally Marinette, where after our station stop we cross the Menominee River and enter its namesake town in Michigan.

Powers, 42 miles north of the Wisconsin



border, finds us on a border too, somewhere between slumber and drugged wakefulness. A few passengers get off for the branchline connection to Iron River. We rouse ourselves and step out to get a breath of air and, unexpectedly, see snow and ice. It was 75 in Chicago but it's below freezing here. The wheezy little local train looks nice and cozy, but we scurry back to the warmth and reclining ease of our streamliner. The ride up here in the "North Country" is somewhat rougher, and soon the rocking of the train, the faint click of the rails, and the mellow warmth have us asleep. It's almost two hours later, just shy of midnight, when are awakened by the conductor shouting, "Ishpeming! Leave by the front door, please. Ishpeming!"

HOT WATER, WARM BED

Fortunately, we have reservations at the Mather Inn, a colonial-style structure across from the station. Next to home, is there anything under these circumstances that can

compare with a modest-size hotel having plenty of hot water, an abundance of heat, and layers of covers? The snow and the ice, the wind and the cold only accentuate the amenities of a good hotel.

If you have time, spend a day in Ishpeming. It's a pretty town, clean, orderly, and substantial. You will like the people too, from the very English waitress to those with a Finnish background who eagerly point out the "company mine," the large free library, and the not-so-large Lake Superior & Ishpeming depot. Perhaps an Italian-American, in broken English, will direct you to the attractive residential section. But whomever you talk to, chances are he'll have a foreign cultural background and a different manner of speaking but will be proud of his community. Many tongues and nationalities have made Ishpeming a delightful town.

Another thing about Ishpeming is the importance of the railroad in its daily affairs. People come from numerous neighboring

With Lake Michigan visible in the right distance, the Chicago-bound *Peninsula 400* is moments away from its Milwaukee station stop sometime in the late 1950s.

Joe Barth, Bob Baker collection

towns to ride the *Peninsula 400*, but industry is even more dependent on the railroads. When the Great Lakes ice melts, the long trains of ore cars on the LS&I; the North Western; and the Duluth, South Shore & Atlantic come rattling through the community. If you have the opportunity, take the DSS&A train 14 miles east to Marquette and look at the huge ore docks jutting into Lake Superior.

After a restful night, we get up early to return south on the *Peninsula 400*, which leaves at 7:10 a.m. As we check out of the hotel, we notice on the wall a photograph of a dignified gentleman, William G. Mather, head of the Cleveland-Cliffs Iron Co. and chairman of the board of its affiliated LS&I railroad, for which iron ore is nearly 90 percent of its tonnage. Our streamliner crosses LS&I tracks several times.

As it happens, we arrive at the depot in time to see DSS&A's train No. 2, which is a few minutes late, stopped on the north side of the station platform, as our *Peninsula 400* — not turned, but with the diesels now on the east end — throbs on the south side. What a comparison the trains make! No. 2 is powered by a low-wheeled 2-8-0 with a variegated consist including a weather-beaten express car, a Tuscan red coach, a tank car, a gondola, four boxcars, and a caboose.

Glancing back at the DSS&A engine, we see it has a snowplow on the pilot. In this North Country, one respects winter seven months out of the year, which is why next to the depot there are a number of Railway Express Agency *sleds* alongside the familiar four-wheel hand trucks. Being “snowed under” is no academic phrase from October to April in Upper Michigan.

The conductor is ready to give the high-ball, so we climb aboard. We have our choice of seats in the rear half of the train. All coaches ahead of the diner are reserved for passengers boarding at Escanaba or points beyond. On our left side is the DSS&A track, which we parallel for the 3 miles east to Negaunee. DSS&A No. 2 has edged out ahead of us, but in a few minutes we leave it behind, although it chugs into Negaunee while we're still loading passengers, many of whom drove or took a bus the 12 miles over from Marquette. Though the area is sparsely populated, we make several other stops between Negaunee and Escanaba. The land is mostly second- and third-growth timber — pine, maple, tamarack, poplar, hemlock — as far as the eye can see. We cross the LS&I at Negaunee, and again at Little Lake.

TIME FOR BREAKFAST

By this time we're ready for a good breakfast, so we walk ahead, through car after car until we get a whiff of food. Now we know why the diner is in mid-train — it's something of an ordeal walking through five cars, so think of wending your way through a dozen . . . on an empty stomach! A tap car is part of the *Peninsula 400*'s regular consist, but that car is out for repairs, so the diner on our run has gone through to Ishpeming instead of being cut off at Green Bay as usual.

The train slows for Escanaba, an important Lake Michigan port and lumber center. The large North Western ore docks are visible from the train, but we'll not see the Escanaba & Lake Superior depot because it's about 2 miles from the C&NW station. The 63-mile E&LS does have a rail-motor service, although it primarily hauls lumber.

Our next stop is Powers, where we meet No. 14 from Iron Mountain. Fifty-eight miles later, we're nearing Menominee.

“What's Menominee noted for?” we ask a fellow traveler.

“Surely, you've heard of the Smelt Carnival,” he replies. “Before the war, the North



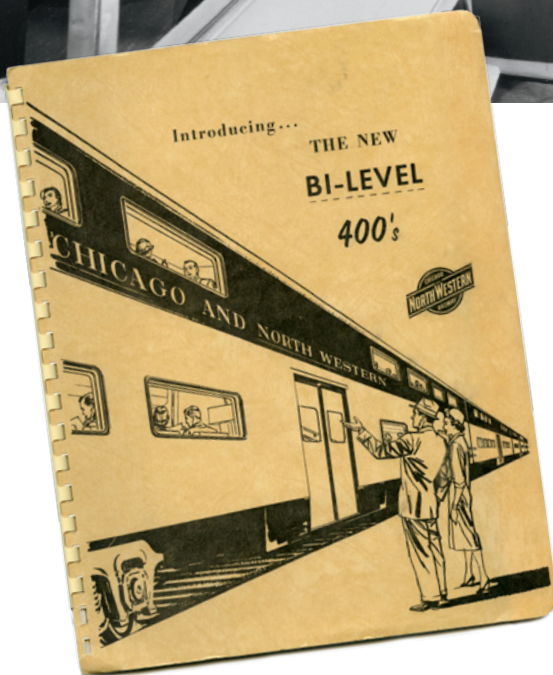
At the Milwaukee station in the 1950s (top), the E8s on the *Twin Cities 400* are ready to head south, while the northbound *Peninsula 400* stands one track over. To the north at Green Bay (above), the Chicago-bound *Peninsula 400* conducts its station work.

Two photos: Doug Jones, Jim Yanke collection

Western used to have special smelt run trains operating all the way from Chicago and jammed to the doors with fishermen. People came with large nets, dishpans, buckets — anything that would hold fish. People think nothing of fishin' all night, 'cause that's when the run is on. But the big thing is the coronation of the king and queen of the carnival in the middle of the Interstate Bridge, which is closed to traffic for the occasion. There's bonfires, and dancin', singin', and everything — the towns just go wild. The last few years, however,” he adds ruefully, “there's been mighty little smelt and very little celebratin'.”

In a jiffy we are pulling out of Menominee and cross the river into Marinette, Wis. We hardly get a look at the tidy Dutch-style station when our train pulls out. We'll average a shade less than 60 mph between here and Peshtigo. Most of the way the track

follows the highway close enough to watch the autos pacing our train. As we climb up to a cool 80, the autos drop back, one by one. Our next stop, Peshtigo, was the site of a terrible fire on October 8, 1871, the same date as the great Chicago fire. The Windy City tragedy made the headlines all over America, while Peshtigo and the surrounding countryside was leveled with hardly any knowledge out of the area. Aid, money, and sympathy came from all quarters to Chicago, yet five times as many people lost their lives in the Peshtigo disaster. In fairness, Peshtigo at the time was an isolated lumbering community. The North Western was just being constructed through the area, though there was a narrow-gauge railroad, long since abandoned, linking Peshtigo with Peshtigo Harbor. So Peshtigo had no communication except by way of the harbor, the bay, and the



In 1958, in exchange for permission from Wisconsin regulators to drop 21 lightly used trains, C&NW upgraded the *Peninsula 400* and *Green Bay 400* with 10 new bi-level cars equipped for intercity runs. In addition to roomy coach seating, the bi-levels had lounge (above) and parlor space.

C&NW

Our *Peninsula 400* is soon speeding south again, pausing at Oconto, then running non-stop for the next 29 miles to Green Bay. The station is busy. We change crews, there is a hasty inspection of equipment, and a switcher couples five additional cars to our train. We start up almost indiscernibly. In a few minutes after pulling out, we pass the station and headquarters of the prosperous Green Bay & Western, then turn left and cross the Fox River. We've left the Valley Line we came north on to ride the Lakeshore Division near the edge of Lake Michigan to Milwaukee. This is 12 miles shorter than the Fox Valley line, although it's more rugged and less populated. The Lakeshore abounds in curves, short grades, and roller-coaster summits.

At Maribel we blast down a mile-long 0.7 percent grade. Manitowoc is the first town of importance, but we bypass the center of town, with the Ann Arbor and Chesapeake & Ohio carferry slips a good mile from the North Western's smart new stucco depot. Sheboygan, 24 miles south and a bit bigger, is sited in much the same way but without benefit of a new station, though it is somewhat nearer to the center of things.

It's a pity we don't stop at Oostburg, or Cedar Grove, or Belgium, so we can see a trace of "Old World Wisconsin." They have large settlements of Dutch, originally from Luxembourg, and many cling to the simple

customs and frugal living of their homeland. In this area, too, you can buy wooden shoes.

We're in Port Washington shortly after noon, with the bright sun overhead and the calm waters of Lake Michigan glistening on our left. The main drag runs from the station down through the tree-lined streets of the town, ending at the lakeshore. A scant mile separates rails and railroading from ships and sailing. About 20 miles later, in the far north reaches of Milwaukee, we take the connection onto our northbound route at Wisconsin interlocking, heading south, now back on double track to C&NW's lakefront depot in Wisconsin's largest city.

FIRST AMONG 400s

Allow a comment here on the *Peninsula 400*'s tremendous popularity. It has been a success right from January 12, 1942, when it made its first run. The train pioneered in opening up C&NW's markets in northern Wisconsin and Michigan's Upper Peninsula, giving faster service, reliable operation, and unexcelled air-conditioned equipment at coach rates. The former standard equipment was relatively good, but streamlining is unquestionably better.

How much better? C&NW traffic to and from the North Country doubled shortly after the *Peninsula 400* took to the rails. In fact, there had been nothing corresponding to the *400* on the northbound run, and the old southbound *Cloverland* took 10½ hours to make the trip that the streamliner covers in 7 hours 40 minutes. At present it's not uncommon for passenger counts to approach the four-figure mark, and one time, it is said, the trainmen succeeded in packing 1,800 passengers aboard a consist with seating for 670.

We have seen that this *400* is a most versatile train: a de luxe commuter known as "the 4:10" to residents of Kenosha and Racine; an 80-minute flyer popular with businessmen hurrying from Chicago to Milwaukee; and yet, just "the streamliner" to folks up in the Fox River valley and beyond. Expressive? You bet, because that is said in a friendly, affectionate way.

Now Chicago is just ahead. We'll get our baggage down and put on our topcoats, and we'll have to reach way back for our hats — these *400* luggage racks are almost as big as an upper berth. Soon we are detraining in the Chicago Passenger Terminal . . . the end of a long, comfortable ride on a long, comfortable train. ■

FRANK P. DONOVAN JR. (1909–1970) wrote this story during his two-year stint on TRAINS editorial staff. He had a 30-year career in research and writing, during which he wrote scores of transportation articles. Aside from his TRAINS tenure and free-lance writing, he worked for AAR, Minneapolis & St. Louis, and Minnesota's Hennepin County.

lakes. When flames from the parched woodlands rose in the sky, buildings ignited like cardboard. Some people sought shelter in a lumber mill, others fled, and others plunged into the hot waters of the Peshtigo River.

To this day, no one knows how many people perished in the "Great Tornado of Fire," but it is estimated that more than 600 died in Peshtigo alone, with about 1,150 total losing their lives in the town and surrounding countryside. It was by far the greatest forest-fire toll in the history of the nation.

On the south bank of the Peshtigo River, remains of the old Wisconsin & Michigan Railway are visible. The W&M took over the slim-gauge, widened it, and operated a line from the harbor up to Iron Mountain, Mich. After most of the timber had been felled, the road struggled along until it quit in 1938.



An EMD E7 and North Western's only Alco-GE DL109 lead a typically long train 209, the northbound *Peninsula 400*, by the interlocking tower at St. Francis, a junction of C&NW main lines on the southeast side of Milwaukee, in the late 1940s or early 1950s.

Two photos, CLASSIC TRAINS collection

BANNER BLUE AND BLUE BIRD

GreatTrains IN PHOTOS



The Chicago–St. Louis *Banner Blue* crosses Lake Decatur, just east of Decatur, Ill., on Valentine's Day 1965. A Norfolk & Western baggage car in an otherwise all-Wabash consist is the only sign of the fall 1964 merger of those roads. The train includes two domes built for the *Blue Bird*.

J. David Ingles, Dan Pope collection



The *Blue Bird* joined the *Banner Blue* on the Chicago–St. Louis run in 1938. The *Bird* became the flagship in 1950 when Wabash re-equipped it with E8 1000 and 6 Budd cars: baggage-lunch-counter-lounge 650; dome coaches 200–202; diner 51; and dome parlor-observation 1601. Parlor business soon topped 1601's capacity, so Wabash would insert a heavyweight, as here on the northbound crossing Lake Decatur on June 1, 1952. The following month, new Pullman-Standard dome parlor 1602 replaced the heavyweight car.

Both, George Krambles, Krambles-Peterson Archive

THE BUDGET streamliner

NC&StL couldn't wait for a spiffy new passenger train, so in 1947 it built its own

BY GEORGE RIEVES



The locomotive selected to power the *City of Memphis* was Pacific 535, built by Baldwin in 1913. Once a celebrity locomotive named *Marie*, by the mid-1940s she was just another K2 4-6-2.



Engine 535 takes water during the eastbound *City of Memphis*'s station stop at Bruceton, Tenn., on December 28, 1947. The demanding 478-mile-per-day assignment wore out the old Pacific, which gave way to a 4-8-4 before being retired in March 1949.

Two photos, James G. Bogle



At war's end in 1945, the Nashville, Chattanooga & St. Louis Railway was a proud, prosperous 1,000-mile carrier forming the central link in several Midwest-Southeast routes, notably the "Dixie Route" plied by several Chicago-Florida passenger trains and operated in conjunction with other carriers. The Dixie Line, as the NC&StL called itself, had a reputation for stretching a dollar, but it also wanted to provide first-class passenger service to meet the burgeoning postwar demand, especially on its own 237-mile line between Memphis and Nashville.

The NC&StL already offered eight-hour service with its venerable *Volunteer*. But the old train was equipped with 1920s-era cars battered by the demands of wartime service. So President Werter S. Hackworth gave Superintendent of Machinery C. M. Darden his marching orders: upgrade service on the Memphis-Nashville run. The solution in 1947 was the new streamliner *City of Memphis*.

Buying brand-new equipment was out of the question. The huge demand for new streamliners had forced established builders such as Budd and Pullman-Standard to quote waiting times of three or four years for a new streamlined train. That was too long for NC&StL. The old *Volunteer* wouldn't last that long.

But in Darden, the railroad had an ace up its sleeve. His expertise as a designer and innovator had been proven by his work on the railroad's sleek J3-class 4-8-4s, delivered during 1942-43 by Alco and officially designated Dixies, but better known as Yellow Jackets and Stripes for their streamlining details. He also helped design the railroad's predecessor J2 4-8-4s, which introduced cast frames and cylinders and Timken roller bearings to the NC&StL.

To the railroad's West Nashville shops went the assignment to build a new train. The mechanical department located six old heavyweight coaches that had been rebuilt from Pullman parlor cars and the crews went to work, ripping out old fittings and slicing off the traditional clerestory roof. Stripped to shells, the six-axle cars took on a snappy, modern look as a

The *City of Memphis*, NC&StL's home-made streamliner, made its first run on May 17, 1947. The regular consist was: baggage-RPO, coach, diner-lounge, two coaches, and a coach-observation car.

NC&StL



CAR 1200: "Color blending with mirrors and drapes lends an air of gracious hospitality to the dining section in the Dining-Tavern car," read NC&StL's caption for this photo. "Delightful meals at moderate prices will be served in atmosphere of the Old South."



CAR 1200: "The Bar is modern and beautiful in the tavern section of the Dining-Tavern car on the CITY OF MEMPHIS. Here the use of pastel colors, blending with mirrors and murals provides a sparkle and gaiety for friendly groups."



CARS 1101-1102: "Coaches are done in restful pastel shades, enhanced by hand-tinted photo murals . . . Individual lights over rubber air-foam cushioned, reclining seats, sectional radio and public address system control are included . . ."



CAR 1103: "The Observation section . . . has the beauty and dignity of a gracious library. . . Comfortable chairs and settees . . . give passengers the pleasant opportunity to while away the time viewing passing scenery, reading, or just dreamy relaxation."

Four photos, Wiles-Hood for NC&StL

rounded roof was installed and broad "picture windows" replaced old-style narrow, openable windows. New air-conditioning made sash-type windows unnecessary. Fiberglass insulation was packed into the walls, and interior walls were covered with fiberboard, a stand-in for scarce aluminum or stainless steel. Modern rubber foam, reclining seats replaced old straight-back plush seats.

While the NC&StL's shops could not match Budd in stainless-steel glitz and technology, they excelled in making the most of cheaper materials. The old Pullmans' trucks were refitted with Hyatt roller bearings. Employees put wood doors with chrome frames in the ends of the cars; "City of Memphis" was inscribed on them at floor level. All these improvements helped lighten the cars, which surely made

life easier for the train's designated power, K2-class 4-6-2 No. 535, a 1913 Baldwin christened *Marie* after the daughter of a former engineer. With its 72-inch drivers, the 535 was a fast runner, but its performance improved after it was streamlined and rebuilt with Timken roller bearings, integral cast frame and cylinders, and mechanical lubrication. A lightning-striped 12-wheel tender patterned after the ones used on the Yellow Jackets allowed longer intervals between fuel and water stops.

Suddenly, West Tennessee had a new streamliner. Maybe it was shy of the elegance of the *20th Century Limited* or the dash of the *Super Chief*, but for a bob-tailed day train, the six-car streamliner filled the bill perfectly. Hackworth frequently visited the shops as



***City of Memphis* obs car 1103, laying over with the train at Nashville in September 1948, had 48 coach seats and 20 lounge chairs.**

L. O. Merrill

work progressed and took pride in the results of employees' efforts. The price tag for the whole project: about \$350,000.

With its stylish engine and snappy blue-and-gray cars, the *City of Memphis* caught the public's eye for a short time. But comfort and speed could not overcome the dual forces of auto travel and rising operating costs. Before long, the *City* would lose its dining car, then its observation car; by 1955 it was coach-only and nameless. Although the service survived past the August 1957 merger of the NC&StL into parent Louisville & Nashville, the train would be discontinued by 1958, barely 11 years after its birth as the *City of Memphis*. By its end, the accommodation had shrunk to a lone GP7 (albeit painted in the NC's passenger blue and gray), the RPO, and a single coach. Even in its latter days, the little train was still reasonably fast, carded for a 5-hour 5-minute morning run to Nashville, and, after a 55-minute layover in the capital, a 5-hour 35-minute return trip.

Although Pacific 535 went to scrap decades ago, today all but one *City of Memphis* car survives. The observation car and baggage-RPO are at the Tennessee Valley Railroad Museum in Chattanooga. One coach became a focal point of a historic preservation project in Lynnville, Tenn., where it has been converted into a museum and exhibit car. One car rests in Mount Pleasant, Tenn., a survivor of an L&N wrecker train. Another car runs out of Dillsboro, N.C., on the Great Smoky Mountains Railway.

The *City of Memphis* doesn't burnish the rails out of Nashville anymore, but at least some of it survives after 70 years. And that would be satisfying for Werter S. Hackworth, who once said, "I don't know of a more beautiful sight or sound than that train going by!" ■

GEORGE RIEVES, of Columbia, Tenn., has had three articles in *CLASSIC TRAINS* publications, all concerning NC&StL subjects.



TRAVEL ...family style

Why go by train? Follow Bill, Dottie, and little Sue Andrews on a trip from Chicago to St. Louis and you'll see some of the reasons: low cost, comfort, convenience, and speed

PHOTOS BY **WALLACE W. ABBEY**



Two F3 diesels bring GM&O's Chicago-St. Louis *Ann Rutledge*, named for the woman thought to be Abraham Lincoln's first love, into the station at Bloomington, Ill., on August 2, 1952.

H. M. Stange, Krambles-Peterson Archive

1 "Bill and Dottie Andrews" and their daughter "Sue" (in reality, *TRAINS* magazine Art Director W. A. Akin Jr. and his wife and daughter) look out from a coach window on GM&O's *Ann Rutledge*, an early aluminum lightweight train dating from 1937.



2 A red cap takes the Andrews family's bags as Bill pays the taxi driver at Chicago Union Station. The red cap fee in Chicago is 15 cents per bag.



3 "Two to St. Louis," Bill tells the ticket clerk. Cost: \$8.56 each, with tax. Sue, age 3, travels free. The round-trip fare would be \$15.41.



4 It's shortly after 8 a.m. as Bill shows his tickets to the gateman. The family's 284-mile trip to St. Louis on the "Alton Route" will take an easy 5 hours 20 minutes.



5 The red cap precedes the family down the ramp to the train, where he will stow their luggage in a compartment at the end of their coach.



6 At their seats, Bill hands Sue her favorite doll to keep her amused until the train pulls out of Chicago. Although they own a car, Bill and Dottie prefer the train for long trips.



7 Hostess Marilyn Cocks shows Sue a folder describing the *Ann Rutledge*. GM&O predecessor Gulf, Mobile & Northern was the first railroad with train hostesses.



8 Besides carrying a dining car, the *Ann Rutledge* also offers at-your-seat snack service between meals, provided by one of the diner's waiters. Sue chooses a sandwich.



9 Sooner or later, every little boy or girl who rides a train discovers the water dispenser, and usually makes several trips to the end of the car for a drink before the ride is over.



10 Bill has retired to the lounge car for a before-lunch highball; Dottie plans to join him later. Meanwhile, she reads *The Little Engine That Could* to Sue.



11 The coach lounge is as well appointed as the first-class one in the observation car, and it serves the same assortment of refreshments. Next: lunch for Bill, Dottie, and Sue.



12 Sue finds a new friend: 5-year-old Sylvia Cioni, who is traveling with her mother and baby sister to join her father in San Antonio, where he serves in the Air Force.



13 As the train nears St. Louis, Dottie tidies up in the powder room at the end of the car. Meanwhile, Bill gathers up the family's belongings.



14 At St. Louis Union Station, Bill carries Sue down the platform beside the train. It's snowing, and the old 32-track trainshed doesn't keep all the weather out.



15 The red cap follows the family as they climb the stairs from track level to street level. In St. Louis, the red cap fee is 25 cents per bag or parcel.



16 Bill, Sue, and Dottie pause for a moment outside the station before getting into a waiting cab. Despite the weather, the family has journeyed nearly 300 miles in 5½ hours, their clothes and spirits unruffled by the ride.

ILLINOIS TERMINAL'S STREAMLINERS

GreatTrains IN PHOTOS



In 1948 St. Louis Car Co. delivered to the Illinois Terminal three streamlined trains totaling 8 cars (3 cab-baggage-coaches, 2 full coaches, and 3 dinette-parlor-observations). The trains were the last word in postwar interurban luxury, but were plagued with design flaws that restricted their use and mechanical maladies that kept them idle. A three-car streamliner, bound for St. Louis 33 miles ahead, departs Worden, Ill., in about 1951.

John F. Humiston, Richard Humiston collection



PANAMA LIMITED





MY FINEST train trip

Illinois Central's all-Pullman flagship:
"Unquestionable proof to me that the
potential of American railroad passenger
service is both unlimited and untapped"

BY **DAVID P. MORGAN**

Milwaukee, March 15, 1950

Mr. R. E. Barr
Vice-President, Traffic
Illinois Central System
135 E. Eleventh Place
Chicago 5, Illinois

Great guns, Mr. Barr,

but I have failed to uncover any mileage in my file of railroad travel experience that can even equal my passage on the *Panama Limited* out of New Orleans on January 5, 1950. Illinois Central No. 6 was 921 miles of unquestionable proof to me that the potential of American railroad passenger service is both unlimited and untapped. The *Panama* was the concrete realization of a caliber of performance that I had begun to believe was an impossible illusion, a dream that could only hold sway in the minds of impractical idealists.

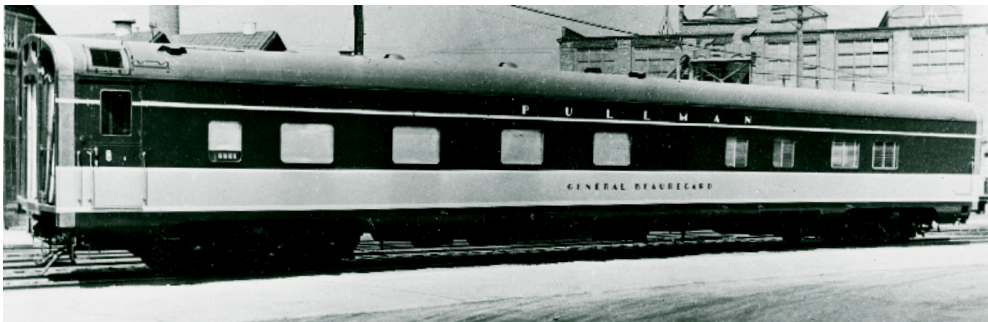
But first let me present my credentials, lest you believe that I am a one-man advertising agency on the make for an IC account. I am one and the same guy who protested about Iowa Division passenger service on the IC in a letter to you last August. The ceiling lights were never darkened all night in my *Hawkeye* coach, and pillows cost 25 cents each; on my east-bound trip, the station switching on No. 12 at Waterloo past the midnight hour could only be defined as rough. I suggested that the lights be off, the pillows free, the switching smooth. In writing that letter, I tried to assume the attitude of an average passenger who, unlike myself, might ride Greyhound or drive his car to Waterloo unless the IC puts its house in order.

Just for the record, let me say that you neither ignored nor dodged the issue. I was informed that the road was equipping both new and existing coaches with blue aisle-lights. My car was simply one of a minority yet to be so modernized. The quarter pillow rental was simply a service charge to cover costs, a fair if debatable reason. As for the nocturnal yard practices at Waterloo, you would check into that promptly. The letter regretted the cause for my complaint, promised a finer *Hawkeye*, and thanked me for writing.

My *Panama Limited* trip may be nothing more than a routine ride on the all-Pullman overnight streamliner; if so, this second letter will be of no great moment. For all I know,

Illinois Central train 6, the all-Pullman *Panama Limited* to Chicago, departs recently completed New Orleans Union Passenger Terminal in 1954. When author Morgan rode in 1950, the *Panama* left from IC's old Union Station, which also hosted SP trains.

Ira L. Swett, Krambles-Peterson Archive



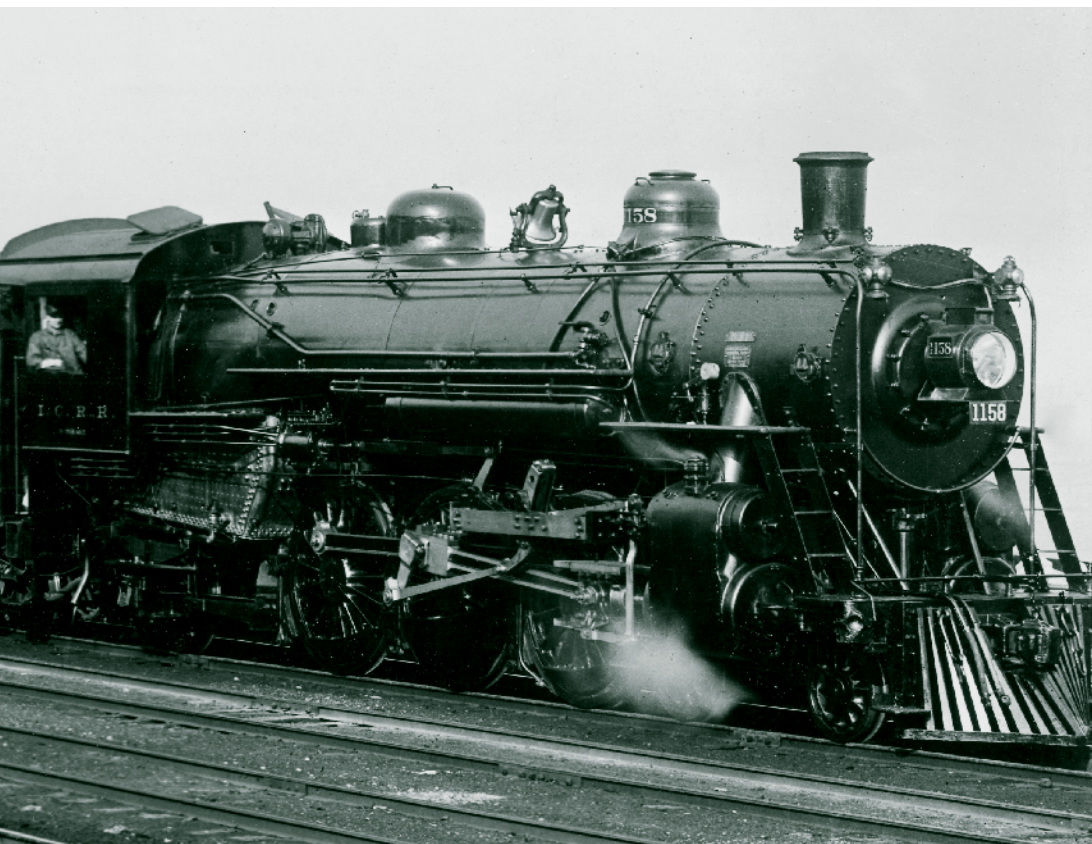
Star cars of the Panama: *General Beauregard* (left) and *General Jackson* were 3-double-bedroom 1-drawing-room 1-compartment lounges. Diners *Vieux Carré* (middle) and *Evangline* sat 32 at tables and 16 in four cocktail booths. *Gulfport* (bottom) and *Memphis* had 2 double bedrooms, 1 drawing room, and 2 compartments ahead of their observation lounges.

Three photos, CLASSIC TRAINS collection

your desk is stacked high with fan mail and your phone rings ceaselessly because IC No. 6 has been doing just what comes naturally. I don't know. I just think that the person who can find the paper and postage to fire even friendly criticism is also obliged to report such an example of quality passenger service.

One more point, Mr. Barr, by way of preface. The TRAINS magazine assignment which took me into New Orleans on that sultry afternoon of January 5 had no connection with the IC. After a week on the road — haunting roundhouses and backshops, talking to traffic solicitors, running down rumors, jotting down fact and figure in my black notebook — I was, in fact, quite happy to look at railroading with no editorial strings attached. If the *Panama* had been tagged for TRAINS, you would have heard from me about net earnings, train personnel, equipment names, and the like long before now.

I was familiar with the *Panama Limited* tradition, however — aware that it was to the



IC renamed its top Chicago–New Orleans train *Panama Limited* in 1911, when interest in the under-construction Panama Canal was high. Pacific 1158 poses with new steel cars in 1916, when the *Panama* was relaunched as an all-Pullman train.

CLASSIC TRAINS coll.; below, J. W. Swanberg coll.

Mississippi Valley what the Southern's *Crescent* was to the Piedmont Plateau and SP's *Lark* to the coast of California. I liked to think of all these Pullman limiteds as handsome testimony that all of railroading's onetime fine gilt edge had not been swallowed up by coach streamliners and name-the-train contests. Luxury trains, that is, that merited the traffic of the discriminating year in and year out without recourse to bus fares or airline hostesses. I seldom rode these trains, but I liked to think they were drumming along each night with their old "rights over everything."

I also recalled photographs of the *Panama* when it was powered by decorated 4-8-2s, held to a more leisurely schedule than today, and when IC charged an extra fare that included dinner — the train that Lucius Beebe said "deserves to be preserved in service as an eloquent souvenir of heartier times and more spacious tastes in comfort." And if memory serves me faithfully, the streamlined *Panama* that followed upon the heels of Beebe's lines was under construction on December 7, 1941, frozen by War Production Board directive, then released from the shops of Pullman-Standard into service as one of the last new passenger trains until peace.

Interesting incidentals, I suppose, but hardly strong research for an inveterate train rider in for the wonder of his rail mileage. All I asked of Illinois Central, as a paying passenger aboard No. 6, was dinner and

breakfast, a night's sleep, and a *Morning Hiawatha* connection next a.m. in Chicago. A *Hawkeye* customer could expect the same.

I CHECKED my topcoat and bag out of a concourse luggage locker the moment a switcher had parked the *Panama*'s 14 cars of streamlined orange-yellow-brown in New Orleans Union Station and the train gate was opened for loading. No. 6's observation-lounge-sleeper was my first tangible hint that the train it trailed was something special; its recessed IC-diamond drumhead, its "Panama Limited" in neon tubing script mounted in shallow boxes on either side of the car, its Venetian blinds and simulated window panes, all blended into a design for which I could recall no postwar challenger. In common with its companion equipment ahead, the observation car reflected full-fledged streamlining in its skirts and wide diaphragms. Cleanliness of the cars indicated a thorough job earlier in the day at the train washer.

My spring suit, which is notably comfortable on a winter day in Corpus Christi, where I bought it, felt consciously warm in the humidity of a Louisiana January 5 — and my car was only three back from the locomotives, a long walk from the gate. So on I trod past the red caps, car inspectors, diner, and lounge to *Prairie State*, a 6-section 6-roomette 4-double-bedroom car, line No. 616. I had the last lower on the right to the rear. I gave bag and coat to the porter and

stayed on the ground for a Camel. Up ahead they were loading mail and coupling up a 4,000 h.p. cab-and-booster Electro-Motive E7. An EMD shifter shuffled Southern Pacific baggage cars two tracks over.

"Board! All aboard!" The first of many calls echoed up the polished panels of the *Panama*. I flipped my smoke away and climbed the steps into the coolness of *Prairie State*. Over across the way, the Texas & New Orleans had tied one of its memorable big Baldwin P-9 Pacifics, No. 622, onto a victorious Orange Bowl special being dispatched west to California as Second No. 1. Inside my car, complimentary copies of the *New Orleans States* had been placed on each seat, in each room and compartment.

Prairie State rocked a bit to the curve on which it was standing as two pairs of V-12 GM diesels accelerated from a lazy idle to a businesslike 325 revolutions per minute and kept climbing. Five o'clock on the nose; the *Panama* was on its overnight journey from sun to snow. A running brake test punctuated by a couple of air horn blasts, then the IC roundhouse was passing on the left. An Alco-GE passenger diesel with the sunset herald of the SP on its boxy nose caught me off guard — new power for the *Sunset Limited*. The P-9s had at last been bumped.

A pause to pick up passengers at Carrollton Avenue, then a highball for Hammond. No. 6 held up traffic crossing the boulevard and rails of a Tulane-route street railway line. Minutes later, the long classification tracks of Mays Yard were sweeping by: the miracle yard rushed to completion in 1944 to blast the freight blockade that threatened the Port of New Orleans during World War II — the yard cited as the best investment the Illinois Central has made during the last 40 years.

Dinner seemed a good investment for me. Almost subconsciously I observed that the *Panama* was riding well (vestibules are a convenient lab) — far better, in fact, than the much-advertised streamliner on which I had left Chicago shortly before Christmas.

A wide window in *Vieux Carré*, the diner, lent a truer expression of the *Panama*'s pace. I estimated offhand that we were hitting at least 85 mph, maybe more. Aboard this Illinois Central train splitting the still of the





The *Panama's* diners featured photo-murals depicting the antebellum South and china with a French motif. Beyond the waiter were two intimate cocktail nooks. Morgan observed that the menu listed "a delightfully extravagant content of food and drink."
Illinois Central

swamps within 100 miles of New Orleans I discovered an almost perfect duplicate of a Milwaukee Road speedway schedule — little variation in gait, equal riding calm and quiet. It was good track being used to its full advantage by modern equipment and inspired dispatching.

STARTING with the filet of walleyed pike at \$2.60, the menu indexed a delightfully extravagant content of food and drink. It was a rather difficult selection for a traveler adjusting himself to the austere one- and two-entree service of other dining cars which labored under the blanket of economy (a dim way out, perhaps, in view of the once-merited and still-blurbed joy of eating on a train). I settled on the select combination grill (\$3.25), resisting the temptation of a shrimp cocktail (only 30 cents extra) for the orange juice test.

Orange juice it was — no canned over-

tones of taste or obvious artifice — but real, honest, American, iced orange juice. The ham and chops and vegetables and coffee and dessert that followed were uniformly excellent, served in an atmosphere of cordial hospitality by a waiter who did not mistake long delays between dishes for true sophistication. The car itself, with photo-murals of an antebellum South and, on either end of the dining room, tiny windowless nooks embracing embossed Creole mosaics, was a setting I had begun to believe existed only in the *Car Builders' Cyclopedic*.

I assume, Mr. Barr, that *Vieux Carré* is no stranger to the silver-plated rule that all railroad diners lose money. Yet I can conceive of no more profitable manner in which the IC's passenger traffic department can pen red ink on its accounts.

Next door in *General Beauregard*, a lounge car with 3 double bedrooms, 1 drawing room, and 1 compartment, I found another

Panama Pullman of original design. Panoramic prints of Latin American vistas topped a curving wall at the rear, while through a mirror-flanked archway lay a perfect miniature of what I guessed to be French Quarter architecture. At any rate, I remember iron chairs with black leather upholstery, a bar worthy of Leadville, wooden shutters crowned by crescent glass, and a cast-iron grilled door with flower design opening into the aisle down past the sleeping rooms.

My description may seem inaccurate on a point or two and possibly ornate to you, but I want to record one traveler's impression of *Vieux Carré* and *General Beauregard* while it is still fresh — and also free of the embellishments and exaggeration that might become a measure of memory. The plans of the carbuilders for mass production of a few standardized blueprints find a robust argument in lower cost, but such a program could never produce a *Panama Limited*. And



In the 1942 *Panama's* observation cars (above), the picture windows sported grilles that simulated the look of colonial-style small panes of glass. The mid-train lounges (right) offered a variety of seating choices for 21 people in two rooms.

Two photos, CLASSIC TRAINS collection

I like to think that Nos. 5 and 6 may create much of their repeat revenue simply because they are different from the run-of-the-mill, pastel-shaded, chrome-lined streamliners that rely almost solely on their names for individuality. Detroit automakers cut costs by mass production, but Detroit also displays a new model every year.

No. 6 braked to a creeping 10 mph over the trestled Manchac Bridge, then traveled on through scattered rain to Hammond. Talk and laughter in the lounge was of good humor and small significance — mostly southern businessmen whose lack of planned pretense seemed to compensate for formal-fit black and navy blue attire. In particular, I recall a large man with a voice that would carry over open safety valves who variously pointed out the best hotels of small towns the *Panama* passed, paid the bill on drinks for an assortment of friends and utter strangers, and related an earthy brand of Tennessee humor.

As No. 6 heeled to the curves entering Jackson, Miss., the fat man chided passengers who found it difficult to navigate down the lounge and was not in the least perturbed when a bottle of soda water finally gave up its fight with gravity and slid neatly into his lap.

As the *Panama* stood in Jackson, I awaited the jolt or thud or both that would signal the



uncoupling of No. 6's New Orleans-Jackson parlor car and the addition of a Pullman that originated in Gulfport. But instead of a jolting thud, I detected only a weak tremor, as if a car inspector had opened a journal box cover on our car (naturally not the case because the *Panama* rides on roller bear-

ings). Either there was no pickup and set-out in Jackson on the night of January 5, or the IC switchmen were masters of their art.

SLEEP was hard to come by, in spite of a lower berth, correct car temperature, good roadbed, and all the other details that make



With about 13 miles to go before it reaches Central Station, Chicago, the *Panama* speeds beside IC's electrified suburban tracks just south of Kensington on August 5, 1950. The power is an E7A-E7B pair, as when Morgan rode the train seven months earlier.

H. M. Stange, Krambles-Peterson Archive

for rest. Maybe by that hour I was thinking of the *Panama* in terms of TRAINS, anxious to write even a personal, subjective account of the journey. Or I might have mused that I could endorse No. 6 for even so stern a critic of railroad manners and morals as a brother who is gainfully employed in the aviation industry.

Unless I was aboard a rare trip of the *Panama*, this Pullman streamliner was a precision-engineered operation drafted to hold its own in the de luxe passenger market by offering satisfaction — not simply a package of speed and orange-yellow-brown cars and diesels, but a careful handling of the details from the typeface of the menu through to choice and training of personnel. One felt as a guest aboard this train. That was it: a *guest*, not just a ticket number going along for the ride.

Moreover, this was a train that rode right through the factual barbed wire so often strung up in answer to passenger-service criticism. Seniority didn't stifle train crew courtesy on No. 6. Diner deficits didn't cut the quality of meals to meatloaf standards. I was pleased with but was not charged for the New Orleans newspaper. The Jackson station switcher had to lock into the identical cou-

plers employed on other roads. Were all these extras the exclusive right of the *Panama*? Reports from friends on the dawn-to-dusk *City of New Orleans* made that answer doubtful. Was it the controlled-capacity, long-distance pattern of the *Panama* that made quality feasible? I had ridden similar mileages on other streamliners and never been unusually impressed by the service.

The answer was almost too clear. On my adding machine, at least, the *Panama Limited* performance could be commonplace provided other carriers invested the time and cash and effort of the Illinois Central. This was not to say that IC had a corner on the market. My own travel experience, on which this letter is based, is too limited to underwrite an opinion like that. But on the basis of my own traveling, coupled with printed and vocal notes of repute on the subject, I venture to say that not more than 15 percent of the nation's feature trains are providing the full scope of service expressed in the *Panama*.

MORNING came to me at Mattoon, Ill. Snow and ice lay over the land. Three quarters of an hour later, on Champaign's elevated station tracks, I could look down from

the diner to a man throwing salt over the slippery ground around the express office. Meantime, breakfast was just as fine as dinner the night before.

Up forward, the distinctive lounge of *General Beauregard* maintained a reversed look. The drinks and jokes and talk of the previous evening had faded; a couple of passengers smoked and rendered the expected comment on Illinois weather, while another studied the sports section.

Frequently the lull was lost when a modernized Mountain or 2-8-2 slammed by in the opposite direction, its rapid exhaust buried in a banging roar of tonnage. It was good to be riding a road on which the steam locomotive still held down both the hotshots and the drags in the old tradition.

No. 6 was running late, the conductor said, and the train had grown during the night. He sat on one of the iron-leather chairs and identified the three diesel-powered passenger hauls that hurried by on the southbound main as (1) the *City of New Orleans*, (2) the coach section of the every-third-day *City of Miami*, and (3) that Florida streamliner's Pullman section.

The captain figured that we should be in Chicago by 10 a.m., allowing for the fact that



Here's train 6 again, almost home at 57th Street, Chicago, on June 8, 1962. The observation car has lost its neon "Panama Limited" signs below the windows on the sides, but carries the train name on the letterboard and diamond-shaped tail sign.

Bob Krone



IC E6s 4001A-B and 4002A-B, four units total, were built for the streamlined *Panama Limited* and carried the train's name on their noses. In 1946 they were renumbered 4001-4004. Two-year-old 4001B and a sister stand at New Orleans on October 3, 1943.

R. H. Kindig

"when you've got 17 cars and two units, you're not going to set the world on fire."

Maybe not, but 4,000 Electro-Motive horsepower at least had the globe smoking as they gunned through Matteson, riding over the fill that hurdles the tracks of the Elgin, Joliet & Eastern and the Michigan Central as No. 6 flashed into the electrified zone. Next came Homewood and then skirting huge Markham Yard along its west side.

Then came the names of Chicagoland: Cook County Lumber, Electro-Motive, Buda, Van Cleef Brothers, IC's Burnside car shops. We rolled through Grand Crossing (under the Nickel Plate, then the Pennsylvania and New York Central) as the porter was calling out 63rd Street.

A two-car Chicago South Shore & South Bend electric train slipped past us, headed toward Michigan City, then a four-car South Shore train paced us out of 63rd Street. The South Shore gained speed, passed us, and tunneled under our main line to reach the three downtown high-level suburban platforms. A couple of New York Central trains (more correctly, Michigan Central and Big Four) rolled past us toward 63rd Street.

The *Panama Limited* entered its Central Station track, drifted by the redcaps and passenger agents, and spent its motion at approximately 9:55 — 25 minutes late but in

comfortable time for me to make the *Morning Hiawatha* departure at 10:30.

I CALL that my finest train trip, Mr. Barr, but permit me to define the compliment as meaning overall excellence of service. I have tried to keep the average traveler's needs and wants in mind, yet pull no punches from a critical, railroad point of view. The *Panama* was neither the most exciting nor the most enjoyable rail journey I have known. To say that would be dishonest to a pair of Louisville & Nashville K-5 Pacifics that staged a dazzling run of the *Flamingo* one wet evening in 1945 from Louisville to Junction City, Ky. Nor could I ever forget a Burlington 5600-series Northern racing 17 cars through Nebraska one early morning at a steady mile-after-mile gait of 80 per. Not only these two selected memories occupy my

mind, but also mixed trains and troop trains that brought the rider nearer to the pulse of railroading than is permitted by the sound-proofing and diesels of IC No. 6.

But such journeys do not encourage the trade of the disinterested, so to the *Panama* must go the orchids. You have real reason to be inordinately proud that it carries the Illinois Central's diamond insignia.

Best regards,

David P. Morgan/re

GreatTrains IN PHOTOS



Great Northern parlor buffet *Twin Ports* awaits its afternoon departure from Duluth, Minn., in July 1961 on the fast *Gopher* for Minneapolis-St. Paul. Halfway through the run it will pass sister car *Twin Cities* on the north-bound *Gopher*. Parlor service on the slower morning *Badger* is gone. Into the late '60s GN ran three other regional trains to St. Paul: the *Red River* from Fargo, the *Dakotan* from Minot, and the overnight *Winnipeg Limited*.

J. David Ingles

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